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PURISTS in the use of the word "inflation" will agree that the real news of the President's budget message is that we are embarked on a fairly long experiment with inflation by the unbalanced budget. We have tried to inflate by the expansion of bank credit without success. We now are trying the less orthodox method of the government spending more money than it receives in revenue. If this does not stimulate business and raise prices, the direct method of increasing currency alone remains. The President's optimistic forecast of last year that the budget would balance in 1936 is not only incorrect; it is so incorrect that one must wonder that minds in Washington can change so completely in such a fundamental matter in a brief year. The deficit in 1936, by the President's admission, will be about four and a half billions, an improvement on the estimate for 1935 of less than half a billion, and the best to be hoped for the future is a slow decline in deficits over a long number of years. The increase to the national debt will be correspondingly large, but this appears to us less serious than it does to professional calamity howlers. With interest rates low, and probably destined to remain low for a long time, the larger debt can be carried without great hardship. We do not, however, look with complacence on the President's delay in tackling a social tax reform. A deficit for inflationary purposes may be advisable, but it ought to be accompanied by stiff taxes on all who can bear them, lest the easy-going idea become part of our nature that a nation can spend and spend without in the end having to foot the bill. The last resort of the financially lax is to go in for currency inflation. Social taxation will make many enemies for the Administration, but it is a far better expedient and should not be delayed.

JUST AS THE PRESIDENT was over-optimistic about balancing the budget in 1936, we believe he is unrealistic in expecting to have 3,500,000 employables at work by the fall of the year. A final $880,000,000 for relief is being asked; henceforth the workers on relief projects are to be financed out of the $4,000,000,000 which Congress is expected to authorize for this work. The President has closely defined the kinds of projects on which this money is to be spent. Most of them have a familiar ring, and we see no reason to expect records to be broken in getting them under way. The action of state and local authorities will be needed on many if not most undertakings, and there will be long preliminaries in acquiring land rights and even in moving vast numbers of the unemployed to the scene of work. The country is so accustomed to large figures that it does not dream of the difficulties in the way of transferring a million or two adults to new centers, or appreciate the hardship to family life that this will entail. Nor does it appraise the obstacles in the way of spending four billion dollars. The sum is about three times as great as was estimated for the present fiscal year for all public works and emergency conservation work. Obviously the President does not intend to intrust the expenditure to that personification of slow motion, Secretary Ickes, but according to Washington accounts will promote the dashing and able Harry Hopkins to the new office of spender-in-chief. Mr. Hopkins can move swiftly, but even his celerity, we believe, will not succeed in "abolishing the dole" this year. If he has two million employables at work by next spring he will have reason to be satisfied.

HASTY PRECAUTIONS were felt called for by Democratic leaders in the new Congress to keep its unwieldy majority in line. The once "liberalized" House rule, which gave 145 members the power to force a debate and vote on any measure, has been restored to its feudal form, and now only a majority can call a bill out of committee. This shuts off the little Republican minority, but it shuts off as well the groups believed to be entranced by such panaceas as the Townsend Plan. While Washington political experts agree that the President will have no trouble in dominating Congress, they allow themselves the inconsistency of predicting the passage of the bonus, possibly even over the President's veto. Obviously it is still too early to make any logical forecast about Congress. We are comforted by its independence in asserting itself about the bonus, though we could supply a long list of measures which would make a more creditable demonstration of defiant democracy than this piece of class legislation. The session has hardly begun, and intimations already are heard of the President's impatience to have it end. April is the month he appears

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to have in mind. But there is no need for haste except in passing the security legislation, which must get out to the state legislatures in a month if there is to be any insurance paid out by 1936. All the other major legislation—and no more formidable program ever confronted a modern Congress—deserves the most conscientious debate, and we should consider it a sign of maturity if Congress decided to devote the rest of the year to its work.

LEFT-WING OPPOSITION to the President's program for social security was effectively dramatized by the National Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance, held in Washington, January 5-7, immediately following Mr. Roosevelt's message. Sponsored by a broad united-front group, the congress was attended by approximately 2,250 delegates, drawn from 40 states, and representing 867 trade-union locals and 202 professional groups, together with more than 400 organizations for the unemployed, and a scattering of church and fraternal groups. Certain sessions drew an attendance of close to 5,000, among whom were a fair number of Administration officials. The congress went on record as favoring a federal scheme of social insurance, supported by a tax on incomes over $5,000 and on inheritances, which would give benefits to all unemployed workers over sixteen years of age regardless of the cause of unemployment or of race, sex, citizenship, or political belief, and would provide compensation equal to the average wages which workers could earn if permitted to work in their normal occupations. To this end it indorsed the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance bill recently introduced by Congressman Lundeen, subject to certain revisions to broaden its scope. While the Lundeen bill stands little chance of coming up for a vote at the present session of Congress, pressure for its adoption on the part of labor and professional groups should materially strengthen the hands of those seeking to liberalize the Administration's program.

WHEN the Secretary of the Interior goes to the trouble of passing a special general order refusing PWA funds to any municipal PWA administrator who holds any public office in his municipality—an order designed for the sole and particular reason of getting Robert Moses out of his job as chairman of the New York Triborough Bridge Authority—the spectacle is plain embarrassing. Before this, Mr. Ickes had been venting his dislike for Mr. Moses, and for Mr. Moses's recent campaign for Governor of New York on the Republican ticket, and for Mr. Moses's unkind remarks about the NRA, merely by withholding funds required by Mr. Moses in the administration of his Triborough Bridge job. Now the Secretary has gone farther, and lèse majesté—as was the case recently when Donald Richberg cracked down on the *Saturday Evening Post*—has become a cardinal sin in the United States; you'd better not call our boys bad names, because if you do, you'll be sorry. It does not seem to matter to Mr. Ickes that Robert Moses has admirably reorganized and is efficiently administering the Triborough Bridge Authority, which is so closely related to his other work as Park Commissioner that to associate the two has saved the City of New York a considerable amount of money. Nothing matters except "our boys," and the most competent Park Commissioner New York ever had has put himself on the wrong side of the fence. It seems impossible to believe that after the proper kind of protest, which Mr. Moses can be expected to make with the hearty backing of Mr. LaGuardia, President Roosevelt will not wish to intervene. General Order 129 might have been considered as Postmaster Farley's kind of politics. It is now Secretary Ickes's kind. We hope it will go no higher.

FURTHER TENSENESS has developed in employer-employee relations in the steel industry and is likely to result in a serious flare-up within the next few months. On December 31 the Steel Labor Relations Board ordered government-supervised elections in the Carnegie Steel Company plants at Duquesne, Pennsylvania, and McDonald, Ohio, which together have approximately 6,000 employees. In order to establish the eligibility of voters at such an election, the board asked the company for its payroll records. This the powerful United States Steel subsidiary refused, contending, as it has maintained all through the hearings and negotiations, that it questions the constitutionality of the Congressional resolution which created the board, and therefore the board's jurisdiction in this matter. The immediate result of this refusal will probably be two sets of litigation. It is expected that the board will ask Pennsylvania and Ohio federal district courts to subpoena the payrolls. Meanwhile on the basis of the fiction that the contest is between the inside and outside unions, the company union has already filed a petition in the Circuit Court for an order restraining the board from holding an election, on the ground that legal elections were held last June, when company-union representatives were duly chosen. In either case, a long-drawn-out legal battle, familiar to steel workers through the Weirton case, will begin all over again.

RANK-AND-FILE LEADERS are determined not to wait upon the courts but to take matters into their own hands. To this end they have outlined a series of tentative plans. The American Federation of Labor will be asked to send organizers into the field immediately. This request is scheduled to be acted on by the A. F. of L. executive committee at a meeting in Washington on January 29. A call has been issued to coal, automobile, glass, and aluminum workers to meet with steel workers in a joint conference in Pittsburgh on February 3 to plan a program of concerted action. Early in March the Amalgamated itself will hold its international conference, and according to the more militant element, "no one will talk us out of action this time, unless the Steel Institute comes to its senses in the meantime." This program will undoubtedly encounter almost as much resistance from the old-line leaders as from industry itself. The usual cry will be raised that the few existing contracts cannot be broken and that "reds" are behind the whole move.

THE CARL MACKLEY HOUSES, the first self-liquidating, labor housing project in the country financed by PWA funds, were opened and dedicated in Philadelphia early in January by the American Federation of Hosiery Workers. This apartment block of 284 units has justifiably attracted great attention. In the first place, it is sponsored entirely by organized labor, with no realtor-agent-broker complications. Secondly, it is based on an exhaustive study of housing and wages in the city, and pro-

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vides modern apartments, cross-ventilated, well-lighted, and fully equipped, for about $10 per room per month, including heat, light, and refrigeration. Thirdly, it is a notable step in the Administration's slum-clearance program, the first of eight low-rent housing projects to reach completion. And, finally, it is not merely an apartment house but a model community, with playgrounds and nurseries, swimming pool, auditorium, solarium, tennis courts, and meeting and rest rooms. The government holds a first mortgage on the property, and the $1,039,999 PWA loan is to be liquidated in thirty years. Named after a youthful hosiery worker killed in a strike and representing all that is best and most progressive in organized labor, the Mackley Houses are a tribute to the hosiery workers' union, and a challenge to labor the country over to seek improved living conditions.

THAT EXCELLENT NEWSPAPER the New York *Times,* with its correspondents and connections in all parts of the world, merits especial credit for having unearthed a new authority on the Soviet Union. For the past few weeks readers of the *Times* have been given their Soviet news via the London *Daily Express* and its energetic Warsaw correspondent, who appears to be better posted on developments in Russia than any of the regular correspondents in Moscow or Leningrad. From this source we learn, for example, of the outbreak of anti-Jewish riots carried on "in the spirit that animated pre-revolutionary pogroms," of the arrest of eight professors from the Marx-Engels Institute, and of the exile of Zinoviev and Kamenev to the frozen regions of the Far North. The *Express* correspondent also seems to have obtained a copy of a personal letter which Zinoviev addressed to Stalin, protesting his innocence. Not to be outdone by its sensational rival, the London *Times,* through its Riga correspondent, dug up a story that six Soviet radio officials had been dismissed on the ground that they had permitted Paul Robeson to sing "Steal Away to Jesus"—and this also was reprinted by the New York *Times.* True, most of these reports were duly denied on the following day; but who cares about denials? Meanwhile, dispatches from the regular American correspondents in Russia continue to report that Soviet heavy industry more than fulfilled its plan in 1934, that the Soviet Union has recently attained first position in the world in iron smelting, and that the grain crop of the past year, despite the drought, exceeded the record made in 1933. Dull though these reports may be to those who have been predicting the early collapse of the Soviet system, we trust the *Times,* in its enthusiasm for its recently discovered source of news, will not dispense altogether with its Moscow correspondent.

THE CRIMINAL-SYNDICALISM trials in Sacramento are getting under way in true California fashion. On December 15 headlines appeared in the Sacramento papers to the effect that the Communists had threatened death to jurors and to the District Attorney. The story revealed that eighteen men had appeared at the home of a prospective juror and told his wife that they represented the International Labor Defense, which is defending the case, and that they would kill her husband if he accepted jury service and voted guilty. They added that they had already killed eleven people and would kill many more with machine-guns. That morning in court Judge Lemmon conducted an investigation of the fantastic story. Mrs. Nick, the woman involved, was called to the stand. Under the examination of Leo Gallagher for the defense, she told a convincing story of the visit of the eighteen men, but certain significant details seemed to cast doubt on their claim to represent the I. L. D. They were, she said, well-dressed, drove good cars, and were middle-aged, a description which seems to fit vigilantes, or even gangsters, more snugly than Communists. The doubt grew when Mr. Gallagher put the District Attorney himself on the stand, and brought out through sharp questioning the fact that Mrs. Nick had telephoned the District Attorney immediately after the visit; that instead of bringing the matter up in court he had asked her to come to his office, and without so much as an attempt to investigate, had her tell the story to newspaper reporters. In the course of the examination, in which the judge also asked questions, the District Attorney admitted that he was having jurors "shadowed," and in explaining his actions contradicted himself and became much confused. The liberal and radical press should keep the full light of publicity upon the Sacramento trial, in which the Communist Party and the agricultural overlords of California are the real contenders.

HOLLYWOOD, which deals only in superlatives, has nailed up another record. According to the report of five actors appointed to formulate under the NRA a program of fair practices between producers and players, the movie industry has the lowest ethics of all. The following brisk paragraph is the theme of the report which has been submitted to the administrator for the moving-picture code:

> The actors have exhausted every effort to agree with the producers on working conditions. They have been tricked, hamstrung, and lied to. Every dishonest practice known to an industry the code of ethics of which is the lowest of all industries has been resorted to by the producers against the actors.

The all-star committee headed by Robert Montgomery then presents a review of the Horrors of Hollywood. Some 80 per cent of Hollywood's population is barely able to keep alive on the scraps they get from the industry's table; excluding extras, 71 per cent of the actors who worked in 1933 earned from less than $1,000 to $5,000, and only 12 per cent earned from $5,000 to $10,000; by contrast six producers and studio executives earned $1,546,342; actors get only 1⅗ cents out of the movie-goer's dollar; and the committee's report of the hours and conditions of work might well dampen the great American ambition to become a movie star. We are sorry we cannot report either the triumph of virtue or a happy ending in this latest production from Hollywood. In fact, the review ends on a line that might have been inspired by Karl Marx, who has always got a very bad press. Having pointed out that the actor is paid only on the basis of results, the committee states:

> There is apparently no penalty for failure for a motion-picture executive. The same group of men who have taken millions of dollars out of the American public through their manipulation of the motion-picture business are still in control. With few exceptions they have never contributed anything . . . to the advance of the art. Yet these same men arrogate to themselves a despotic feudalism over the working conditions of those who actually make pictures, creating talent.

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The New Deal of Lower Wages

WE neither share nor understand the approval which has greeted the President's falsely described intention to abolish relief in America. The approval is what we should have expected and joined in had the intention been carried out. A gigantic works program which would give every unemployed man and woman work at standard wages would have been an undertaking worthy of the mandate bestowed on the Administration in the November election. The President, for reasons beyond our conjecture, has not been stimulated by that tremendous challenge to his courage, and the program he offers is not the abolition of relief, but the creation of a new form of relief, work at low wages. This is bad enough for those who to save their families must now donate part of their services to the state. It is still worse for labor in private employment, for the strongest impetus is now given to reduce wages in private industry. The government will be setting up a scale of low wages for work that is done for higher wages in private employment. Where there are two scales of wages for similar work the lower rate in the end prevails. Organized labor, even with the strongest defensive forces of collective bargaining, cannot long withstand such an economic fact. Since under the New Deal collective bargaining is yet to be realized, labor can offer no resistance. The skilled trades will not be affected at first, but common labor will suffer almost from the outset, and ultimately the entire nation is doomed to drift to a lower standard of life. Under capitalism, with the government frightened of replacing a paralyzed private initiative, this may be the inevitable evolution. We believe the country wanted to be done with relief for the obvious reason that work is infinitely better than charity. But we do not believe it wanted the government to pay depressed wages. It even looks to us as though the White House had in preparation the kind of plan which had been awaited, a great and worthy national project, and this had been scuttled at the last minute by influences hostile to the further expansion of the government in business. Omit the lower wages, increase the appropriation to a realistic figure, and the President's message would be an epoch-making pronouncement. Inject the issue of lower wages and we are perilously near to the pre-New Deal inhumanity of the Hoover days.

What in effect is it the President now says to the unemployed? "If we give you cash or market baskets without requiring you to work full time it undermines your morale. Henceforth you shall work full time on a government job at less than standard wages for the good of your character." We know many in comfortable circumstances who will welcome such a puritanical punishment of misfortune, since they need the excuse that the poor are being penalized for their own good. Nor do we deny that the unemployed in most cases will be thankful for a larger annual income for their families whatever the price. They would be just as thankful for larger cash payments. They do not see that the country is being pushed toward lower living standards under the pretext that their souls will be saved. Sooner or later it will dawn on these people that while they are not permitted to get something for nothing, the government, in taking their full time at less than standard wages, is not above such immorality. We have heard only one argument against these objections which is not confined to the muddled thinking about morale and character building. (We do not deny that unemployment destroys morale, and undermines character, but it is unemployment, not relief, which does so.) It is argued in Washington that the worker on relief is getting a kind of insurance policy, an insured income, from the government, so that his position is safer than that of the private worker, and for this he ought to pay a premium in lower wages. This is a poor contention, but at least something can be said for it. The President, however, has given no public indication that the reduction in wages on relief work is to be anything so small as an insurance premium. If this is what he has in mind, the quicker he says so the better. But we warn him that the argument is superficial and dangerous and would set an unhappy precedent. Private employers, particularly those in steadier branches, would quickly seize upon the theme, and the safer a man's job the greater the "insurance premium" that would be deducted from his wages. The President needs no justification for paying government employees whatever their services are worth. It is the simple and honorable course, and if the President is imbued with ideas of insurance, let him look at the types in his own social program and realize that low wages does not belong among them.

Furthermore, we do not understand the President's unemployment figures. We believe he will find that considerably more than 3,500,000 of those on relief are genuinely employable. But even if his estimate is accurate, and assuming that he does provide work, indirectly, for another 3,500,000, this does not take care of all the employables in America. According to the Department of Labor, the unemployed number around 9,750,000. Deduct 1,500,000 as unemployable and 7,000,000 for whom work is to be found, and 1,250,000 are left. The A. F. of L. statistics make this number 2,250,000. Who are they? They are the unemployed whose resources or relations have kept them from reaching the relief rolls. Is it the President's philosophy that this great host, since it is not utterly penniless, does not deserve work? Is it his doctrine not only that government work is a new form of relief, but that the recipient must pass a means test? We should have expected the President to agree that unemployment and the inability to find work were the only qualifications needed to entitle a person to work for the government at this time. We trust that unemployment insurance is not to be administered with a means test, and we see no possible excuse for the government, if it is providing work until unemployment insurance gets under way, to refuse its services to those who have managed to stay off relief rolls. For the sake of this group, for the sake of honorable wages on government work, most of all for the sake of the American standard of living, we urge the President to enlarge his scheme, ask enough money to make it succeed, pay standard wages, and thus save the country and himself from the most serious mistake he has yet made.

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A Year of LaGuardia

FOR a little more than a year New Yorkers, and interested persons in the rest of the country, have had an opportunity to observe a reform mayor in action. They have seen Mr. LaGuardia's vigorous temperament at its best and at its worst—he has been courageous, choleric, threatening, dilatory, rash, and always interesting. His sincerity and honesty have never once been seriously questioned.

Surrounding himself as he did at the beginning with a group of men far above the average of city administrators in public spirit and intelligence, the Mayor has seen as a result an admirable overhauling of most of the city departments, the elimination of large chunks of graft, the substitution of the fit for the unfit in important and unimportant positions. His most unfortunate appointment was surely that of General O'Ryan as Police Commissioner. The General bullied and blustered his way out of office, and in his place Mr. LaGuardia chose a man who had had years of experience in the department, who will undoubtedly administer it in an orderly, firm, and effective manner, but whose public tributes to the third degree in his orders to policemen to "muss-up" suspected criminals make him a lamentable choice for his position. While the Mayor has never publicly championed the third degree, it is reasonable to suppose that Commissioner Valentine would not have issued his order in the first place, or surely would not have refrained from modifying it after sober second thought, if any objections had been raised by his chief. Mr. LaGuardia has given plenty of assurance that his own methods of carrying on his office can be autocratic enough, even to the point of violence, and, indeed, one of the chief temperamental counts against him is that he has managed to subdue all but the bravest of his subordinates and colleagues—for example, the intrepid Mr. Moses, who is fully able to talk back to His Honor—so that around his office and outside his door there is an air of almost frightened expectancy; the lightning may strike at any time! His bawling out—there is no other word for it—of protesting emergency relief workers cannot be justified on any grounds whatsoever.

This vigorous and outspoken temper, however, has had its good moments also: for example, when the Mayor—quite unlawfully, one suspects—promised to turn off the water supplied to laundries in the laundry strike; or when he sent health inspectors into hotel kitchens during the hotel workers' strike, in an unsuccessful effort to bring the managers to terms; or when, during the taxi strike, he threatened to put receivers into taxi companies to hold tax funds if an adjustment could not be reached. His present campaign against the utility companies is direct action of the same sort. Whether or not it would be possible for the city to build, finance, and maintain its own power plant is a highly debatable question; but there is no doubt that by his promise to do just that, Mr. LaGuardia has put the fear of God into the breasts of utilities officials.

After all, however, the most important aspect of the city administration is the budget. How much money does Mr. LaGuardia propose to spend, and where will he get it? He got off to a bad start with his economy bill last spring. This measure, which he justified on the ground of the necessity of getting money at once for an emergency, took toll of inadequately paid city employees, whose salaries had been already reduced in the interests of economy. *The Nation* at that time refused to join the chorus of blame for the Mayor because it had confidence that his subsequent financial program would not only repeal the salary cuts but provide a more commendable method of raising funds. Neither of these expectations has been realized. The salary cuts are still in effect, and the sales tax, that most indefensible and inequitable levy on those least able to bear it, has been imposed on the citizens of New York. In defending his acceptance of the sales tax—of which he heartily disapproves—Mr. LaGuardia again advances expediency. It had to be done. It was necessary to raise fifty million dollars for relief in 1935; the sales tax was the only way of raising funds which seemed to the bankers sound enough to lend money on. This brings us to the crux of the situation. The bankers hold the city in an iron grip, have first lien on city revenues; no matter who suffers, the bankers must get their pound of flesh. This bankers' agreement, of course, was inherited by Mr. LaGuardia from his Tammany predecessors; yet one of his most prideful accomplishments, in his account of his stewardship, is that he has lived up to it, that he has restored the city's credit, almost completely destroyed in the mad days of Jimmy Walker and the O'Brien inanities which followed. Out of a city budget of $600,000,000, $179,000,000, or approximately 30 per cent, is allocated to debt service. What if Mr. LaGuardia had announced that a fourth of this, or some $45,000,000, would not be paid; and that, rather than break its moral contract with teachers and policemen, rather than impose a tax which the poor must largely pay, the city would prefer to default on its agreement to the bankers? At the word "default" the Mayor shudders. And it is clear that to consider such a possibility is to choose between two very real evils. The credit of the city is the property of its citizens and should not be lightly threatened. In defaulting on part of his bankers' obligations the Mayor would have been obliged to establish an alternative line of credit to insure future borrowings. To this end Mr. LaGuardia himself is already proposing a municipal bank to handle refunding, at a low rate of interest, of city indebtedness as it comes due. The establishment of such a bank, bound by statute to invest, let us say, only in municipal, state, or federal government bonds—the banks which now hold the city's credit in their grip have more than 60 per cent of their investments in real estate, a third of which is in some kind of default—would offer competition to the existing banks and provide an alternative banker on whom the Mayor could call for future loans.

The question, therefore, is whether or not the Mayor took the course which was most fair and just to the majority of the citizens of New York when he adhered to the bankers' agreement at the expense of the lower-income groups in the population. He thinks he did, and plenty of estimable citizens will firmly support him in his stand. But the issue is surely debatable, not only for the present, but in the future.

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The Rome Agreement

THE bargain driving between France and Italy has come to an end, and the fact, though not the details, of an agreement has been proclaimed with all the pomp this momentous event merits. The accord is certain to enhance the chances of peace in Europe. The independence of Austria is to be guaranteed by France and Italy, with the prospect that Britain and even Germany will support the guaranty. The competition between France and Italy in the Danubian countries will cease, which makes it possible at last to take common-sense measures to restore the economic vitality of Eastern Europe. The League of Nations will gain in value, since the agreement brings Italy into the Franco-British system, and the League is an integral part of that system. The unofficial résumé of the agreement speaks of Italy's accepting the French thesis that German rearmament is illegal until a general disarmament treaty is reached. This, if true, would mean an early resumption of disarmament negotiations. Also it would explain why Hitler has taken strange methods to confirm the dominance of the Reichswehr in the defense of the Reich, a possible prelude to the disarming of the Storm Troops. Thus for Europe the agreement opens far-reaching possibilities and should relax the terrible tension which has made a war in the near future seem inevitable.

What is not yet clear is whether this benefit has been bought at the expense of Abyssinia. Italy must henceforth abandon the dream of reestablishing the Roman Empire in Europe, or of setting up a great political confederation equal in importance to that of the French. This is a real setback for Fascismo, and Mussolini certainly demanded and may have obtained compensation in Africa. The agreement deals at length with the known causes of friction in Libya, Tunis, and Somaliland, and though preliminary accounts asserted that France would support Italy in the dispute with Abyssinia before the League, this is omitted in the later reports. It is the familiar technique of peace-making to strike bargains at the expense of defenseless third parties. Germany before the war was to have the gift of Portuguese colonies to satisfy its need for expansion. Italy, stimulating the increase of its population in reckless disregard of the resources of the small Italian peninsula, creates the dire need for colonial outlets. But Abyssinia cannot be disposed of by a French Premier, and Britain, with its preponderant African interests, will hardly permit it to be given away for the sake of European appeasement. Italy will probably have to be content with minor advantages there, as she must in Tunisia, where Italians are to lose their special privileges by 1965, and in the frontier rectifications of Libya and Somaliland. Mussolini, in discussing the agreement, did not hide his sense that he had not done as well as he had hoped, and the Abyssinians may find they can rescue their independence through a strengthened League. A chapter of the agreement of which hardly any mention is made is that dealing with a naval understanding, though such an agreement must have been reached. Britain will be the country primarily interested in its nature. It affects our destiny, too, since Britain will be able to reduce its navy if assured of reductions by France and Italy.

The New Crusade

AS every schoolboy knows and as most adults forget to remember, "gymnasium" means "place of nakedness." It seems, however, that a certain New York establishment recently took the name seriously, and that its proprietors, after having been convicted by a magistrate under the law concerning indecent exposure, were later acquitted by the Appellate Court on the sound legal ground that the exposure was not public within the meaning of the law. Immediately thereupon the Legion of Decency took the matter under consideration, and last week its advisory committee, meeting in the offices of its chairman, the Honorable Alfred E. Smith, drafted a proposed amendment to the law which would make it a misdemeanor for any person in any place "wilfully to expose his person . . . in the presence of two or more persons of the opposite sex whose persons are similarly exposed."

Now *The Nation* has never taken a firm stand on the question of nudism. It has accepted the general belief that exposure to sunshine has a therapeutic value, and it has seen no objection to the practice of certain well-disposed persons who prefer to seek health in cheerful mixed company. On the other hand, it has never been able to take much interest in general nakedness for its own sake, nor has it had much faith in the doctrine that great spiritual benefits accrue to the members of those groups who solemnly take off their clothes just for the sake of taking them off. It has believed, at least, that persons who are benefited by this ritual belong to a special class, and that the class is hardly numerous enough to make it worth while to conduct any very extended propaganda in favor of extending the practice. But neither has it ever been able to feel that nudism was a major sin of our society, or that its suppression constituted one of the chief problems of recovery. And what surprises us is that Al Smith, once a realistic statesman, should have got around to thinking that it is.

We waive the fact that Al used to be considered a liberal. Perhaps liberals do not have to be liberal where convention is concerned, and there have been, besides, a sufficient number of indications that Al is less liberal than he used to be in certain matters more directly affecting the social order. But we do wish to emphasize the fact that he used to know what was important and what was not. We seem to remember that when he was Governor of New York State he confounded his opponents by his intimate knowledge of its business and by the resoluteness with which he swept trivialities aside in order to come to the root of any matter. Is it possible that today he can think of nothing more important to do than to meet solemnly with the members of a committee which includes that great statesman ex-Mayor John P. O'Brien and then to draft a law directed at persons who like to exercise with their clothes off. Mr. Smith is among the outs. His influence has waned and he has no direct power in the affairs of the state he once governed so well. But does he really take much satisfaction in this sort of thing, and does he really believe that his great talents could find no better employment? Just how happy is the Happy Warrior fighting such battles as these? On request we shall be pleased to suggest others.

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Issues and Men

Some Vested Interests

IN a recent address before the Association for the Advancement of Science, Professor Edward S. Mason of Harvard made the point that if we did not find a way of doing away with or limiting the NRA we should soon be face to face with a new vested interest which would insist on being perpetuated in its present form. He did not, he said, have in mind the Washington office force so much as those persons connected with the more than 700 codes, who would naturally resent any effort to muster them out. I took it that he was not opposed to the retention of the good features of the NRA; he was merely referring to what has long been known as the danger in such an organization—if you create a temporary government machine you must be on your guard lest it make itself a permanent part of the government and undertake to mold government policies.

His warning impressed me the more when I read that the President is awarding nearly $450,000,000 more to the army and navy in the next two years. The actual increase for the navy is less than appears, since $150,000,000 was spent by the PWA last year on ships and did not show in the budget. Surely there are no more securely intrenched vested interests in Washington today than the army and the navy. Every time more men and more officers are added to either service the vested interest in those branches of the government is strengthened and the power of their lobby is increased—a lobby which I often think is the strongest within sight of the Capitol. Of course they are always much surprised if you speak of them as a dangerous vested interest. They believe themselves to be the most unselfish and the most patriotic of all our public servants. They are convinced that when they ask for more men or more ships or weapons they are actuated solely by their expert knowledge of the country's defenses and its immediate needs. They insist that they have not the least idea of being a vested interest, that they exist only to safeguard the state; they are not the least bit concerned to build up a lobby or a machine except as they wish to arouse the country to the terrible danger it is in for lack of adequate defenses.

You can point out to them, if you please, that they have been enormously strengthening their machine for years past. "Why not?" they ask. You remind them that no army or navy officers the world over believe that they have large enough forces, and they reply that every man and woman should be in the defense organization; some even point to Mussolini's mustering of all boys at the age of eight as an example for us to emulate. If you dare to go to Congress to urge that we either do not strengthen the fighting services or actually reduce them, their anger knows no bounds. You are deliberately trying to weaken your country's defenses and to lay it open to successful attack by that dreadful enemy which is always lying in wait around the corner. If it were not Japan today it would be England, and if not England, some group of powers plotting to cross the ocean to rob us of our wealth, even if they demonstrably are without the merchant ships to move as many as 300,000 men with the huge equipment of a modern army. You cannot get these officers to see that their own advancement is so inextricably bound up with an enlargement of the service to which they belong that they cannot possibly be unbiased advocates of the policies they urge. They are part and parcel of a vast vested interest which, consciously or unconsciously, never stops seeking its own enlargement.

Thus it has always seemed to me the height of stupidity, if not insincerity, for our Presidents to send navy officers to naval disarmament conferences. They can no more be zealous for the decrease of the navy than I could be unbiased if I were told that the government had decided there were too many weekly newspapers in the country and I must sit in a conference to decide whether *The Nation* should be one of those to be mustered out. I might think that I was just as public-spirited as the army and navy men profess to believe themselves to be, but subconsciously I should be convinced that the *New Republic* and *Today* and the *New Outlook* were the ones to go. That is human nature; when our own fate or that of our profession is at stake we act pretty much alike and are not to be trusted without due allowance for our bias. I would not have any soldier or sailor sit in at any disarmament conference. It is all humbug to assert that they can tell you down to a fraction how many men can be cut, and exactly how many of each type of ship. I had far rather have inexpert minds at work. They are not befogged by professional fads and fancies, or tied up with one of several schools of thought—navy officers are always split into cliques each advocating its own particular brand of strategy or tactics, each separately devoted to battleships, or airplanes, or dirigibles, or submarines. After all, the way to disarm is to disarm; we have had fruitless years of conferences between experts and conventional statesmen. If we are going to get anywhere, someone else must take a hand.

Instead, we go on building up what are already two of our greatest vested interests, so powerful that even our independent Senators rarely attack them. They are supported by more veteran, or semi-military, organizations than the average citizen has any idea of. Take the reserve officers' societies, for example. They have grown so fast and exercise so much influence that I am told the regulars are becoming worried about them. Behind them stands the dull-witted American Legion with its plaintive insistence upon a huge army. How surprised some of these self-appointed defenders of the Republic and the Constitution would be if they read what the founders of this government thought about a regular army! If there was anything those founders hated and feared more I should like to know what it was. But again we fling away their precepts and build up a steadily increasing militarism, backed by all the rich and privileged, by every opponent of a new and better world.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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Our Unreal Budget

Washington, January 7

TODAY is budget day in Congress and I ask forbearance in making comparison with the similar occasion in Great Britain. Americans, I must say, do not know the excitement and importance that can attend a budget. Here it is not one of the prime events of the year. In England it is nearly on a par with the Derby, the Grand National, and the boat race. For two whole hours the nation is as engrossed by a matter of government as it is by a major sporting event, and for somewhat the same reason—to watch an uncertainty being converted into a certainty. The uncertainty has to do with taxation, and since anyone can be affected by a new tax or the remission of an old one, everyone is bound to be interested. Will there be something off the income tax, something on it? The taxpayer snatches a newspaper and quickly calculates whether after all he will have money enough for his vacation, or whether his car will cost more because of a change in the gasoline tax. The man who likes his little nip wants to know if the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken a penny off the pint of beer, or added one. The business man wants more than details; is it a "good" or a "bad" budget? Will it encourage or discourage business? Because the budget contains the answer to these questions, the secret is as closely guarded as are the Crown jewels. I do not mean it is merely kept out of print until the speech is released. Not more than three men may know what it contains until its delivery—the Chancellor, the Financial Secretary of the Treasury, and the Prime Minister. When the Chancellor rises to address the House of Commons he is the personification of mystery, and he continues to keep his secret till well on to the end of his speech. Beginning with a review of the past year he talks drearily of past expenditures and receipts while the crowded House fidgets and strains after every clue. He then drags on to the estimates for the new year, still concealing whether he has a surplus or must make up a deficit. At last he reaches his summary and the secrets are doled out, one at a time, while messengers fly in and out of the tiny press gallery, and news tickers click in every newspaper office and club. The speech finished, he might walk to the nearest street corner without arriving too soon to buy an extra containing the terse summary of the secrets which he may not have shared with more than two men a quarter of an hour before. All over England these extras are being bought. For the Chancellor has his hand in every man's purse in that hour, and everyone wants to know if it is there to give back or to receive.

No excitement like this starts the American pulse throbbing today. The American budget did not produce a single newspaper extra. People will not have asked passers in the street what is in it, or discussed it with strangers in their commuters' trains in the evening. They will not, because the American budget is not a true budget; it is not a final financial plan affecting every citizen, rich or poor. It is a half-story, the annual statement of national accounts, and about as exciting as the bulletins on the condition of reserve banks.

Sir Willmott Lewis, Washington correspondent of the London *Times*, a tactful but profound critic of American institutions, loves to hold forth on the obstructions to American nationality. He does it with a gleam in his eye, like the Mariner's when he detains the wedding guest, and makes his points with penetrating and polished rhetoric. None is more convincing than the unreality of the American budget. He tells of the day when the British House, overwhelmed by the money bills brought in on behalf of the Crown and favorites of the Crown, adopted a self-denying ordinance that no money bills should be introduced which did not have the approval of the Treasury. And he suggests what a mercy to Congress itself it would be if such a self-denying ordinance could be adopted, for then Congress would be freed of the home demand for appropriations, the need of trades, and the details of log-rolling, and could devote itself to the study of legislation. The system would not be complete without the Treasury becoming responsible to Congress, so that the Secretary, at least, would have to resign if faced with an adverse vote in Congress, with the right of appeal to the country. As it is, the American budget will never be genuine until it represents a complete financial plan, so much raised, so much spent, such and such taxes—and only these—to produce the revenue. The President can now only hope that Congress will not meddle with his financial outline. And he can only say that if it makes appropriations of its initiating it must find the revenue to pay for them. We have a Presidential budget which we know today; the Congressional budget will not be finally known until Congress adjourns.

But the argument is not all on the side of the British system. In America the President's veto can and has obstructed the payment of the bonus, and the President is hoping it can do it again this year. Under the British system the Cabinet would resign if a majority in Parliament took the bit in its teeth and ran away with some issue like the bonus. That issue then would be submitted to the country at a general election. Thus under the British system an inflationary majority in the country and the House could have its way within a matter of weeks, and heaven and earth could not prevent it. The only reason this does not occur in England is that British radicalism does not happen to express itself in financial proposals as it does here.

In another respect American methods are superior, and though it is a minor one it is not as unimportant as it may seem. I refer to the help given by the President to the newspaper correspondents in explaining his budget. Last year and again this, he found the time to receive the correspondents and give them ample opportunity to ask every conceivable question about it. Now in England this would be regarded as stark madness. The British government always tells its news first to Parliament, and the press is somehow considered an intruder trying to cheat Parliament as the proprietor of news. I wish Neville Chamberlain, the personification of chill aloofness, might have looked in on the scene as the President talked over the budget with the correspondents Saturday. The British need to discover that the Fourth Estate can be an essential mechanism in democracy.

R. G. S.

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The Power Crisis

By FRANK P. WALSH

TWO facts stand out clearly in any unprejudiced consideration of the power issue. The first is the failure of regulation to secure the low rates which make possible an abundant use of electricity in the home. The second is the effectiveness of public competition, either actual or potential, as a means of accomplishing that result. The only important question which remains is whether public opinion is going to hesitate in choosing between these two alternatives. There is today no question that the power trust favors regulation.

Five years ago, under the governorship of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the alternative was first clearly offered to the people of New York State. Widespread feeling that regulation of public utilities had broken down had led to the creation of a Commission on Revision of the Public Service Law, with three of the nine members appointed by Governor Roosevelt. From that moment the sequence is unbroken to the present day, when, under Roosevelt as President of the United States, it has become a definite national policy that the force of public competition shall be available to consumers of electricity as a protection against extortionate rates. The present Administration sees in the completely electrified home the appropriate culmination of the electrical revolution. To make this possible, rates must be reduced to the point where people can use electric power almost as freely as they now use water.

An abundance of testimony before the Revision Commission made it clear that regulation had, in fact, broken down because the utility companies had developed a procedure which rendered control of rates by the Public Service Commission impossible. Prolonged hearings before the commission were followed by even more protracted litigation, based on fantastic valuation claims, designed to sustain the right to charge excessive rates as a basis for speculation in utility securities. The cost to the people of a single such case ran to $6,000,000. And with what result? The answer is found in the testimony of an important utility executive to the effect that the companies could justify in the courts rates higher than their business judgment would allow them to charge. In spite of regulation, the companies were charging what the traffic would bear. A wide survey of existing rate schedules bore out this conclusion. Regulatory control of rates was little more than a farce, serving to delude the people.

The majority of the investigating commission, composed entirely of the members selected by the dominant faction in the state legislature, recommended that regulation be given another chance to make good, with additional powers and resources granted to the Public Service Commission. The minority, comprising the three members appointed by Governor Roosevelt, found the only assurance of low rates in the force of actual or potential public competition. Its report recommended public development of St. Lawrence power and enactment of legislation giving municipalities the widest latitude in the supplying of electric and other utility services to their citizens on a public basis.

The years since these two reports were issued have vindicated the conclusions of the minority. Regulation, though strengthened by a series of amendments to the law and by new appointments to the Public Service Commission, is no more effective than it was five years ago. Its decisions, when unsatisfactory to the companies, are still being held up by court stays, while the cost of this futile procedure is still being borne by the people either in rates or in taxes. The companies, curbed only by their fear of the growing sentiment in favor of public ownership, are continuing to charge what the traffic will bear.

Many who read this article will undoubtedly recall the opinion of Chairman Maltbie of the New York Public Service Commission in the temporary rate-reduction case affecting the electric companies serving New York City and the Westchester suburban area. Under date of August 9, 1933, he showed that during the depression years 1931 and 1932, when wages, salaries, and incomes from other sources were severely curtailed, these Consolidated Gas Company subsidiaries were paying dividends in excess of those paid at the height of prosperity in 1929, and that for the several companies dividend disbursements during the three depression years maintained an annual average ranging from 8 per cent in the case of Brooklyn Edison to 16 per cent in the case of Bronx Gas and Electric. He showed further that during these same years this group of companies earned a total of $47,982,000 in excess of a 6 per cent return on a rate base calculated to include a fair allowance for working capital. Although the commission's decision, based on this showing, called for a reduction of only 6 per cent in New York City rates, the companies promptly secured a court stay, and the familiar process of litigation to sustain extortionate rates was again under way. More recently the same companies have threatened to meet the city's attempt to force them through taxes to carry their fair share of the depression, either by litigation or by raising rates to cover the additional tax burden. Fortunately for the people, however, the Roosevelt program of supplementing regulation with the force of public competition has been advancing, and within the last week its effectiveness in forcing these same companies to modify their reactionary attitude has become apparent. But that is anticipating my story.

In 1930 Governor Roosevelt fought his campaign for reelection on this issue and was returned to office with an overwhelming majority by an electorate which had begun to understand what an abundant use of electricity at low rates would mean to homes and farms. In 1931 he secured the creation of the Power Authority of the State of New York to assure the public development of 1,100,000 horsepower of cheap hydroelectric energy from the St. Lawrence River, with the primary purpose of securing the lowest possible electric rates for residential and farm customers throughout the state. The law directed the Power Authority to make a fair share of the power available to municipalities "now or hereafter authorized by law to engage in the distribution of electrical current."

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Throughout his second term Governor Roosevelt continued to press for the enactment of legislation authorizing municipalities to go into the power business and to form power districts for the purpose of joint operation. Thus his public yardstick program was taking form, ready for broader application when in 1932 he was elected to the Presidency. In that year Governor Lehman vigorously took up the legislative program in New York State, and in the 1934 legislative session the first municipal-utility bill became law. Meanwhile the Power Authority was laying the foundation for an attempt to negotiate contracts for the distribution of St. Lawrence power, which, in accordance with the law, should fix rates to the ultimate consumers on the basis of the cost of transmission and distribution. A very vital feature of the law directed the Power Authority to determine these costs in accordance with accounting procedure of its own devising.

The limitations of this article do not permit discussion of the Power Authority's three-year study of distribution costs, participated in by more than twenty engineers. It meant an official invasion into a new field of cost analysis which the companies had preferred to leave in the dark in order to maintain a semblance of justification for high residential electric rates. It will be sufficient here to point to the general conclusion—based on analysis of the distribution systems serving typical municipalities throughout the state, checked against similar data from cities served by municipally owned systems—that for an average residential consumption of 50 kilowatt hours a month the rate schedule should make current available at not to exceed an average of 3.5 cents a kilowatt hour. The corresponding average rates for higher average usage should not exceed 2.7 cents at an average of 100 kilowatt hours, 2.1 cents at an average of 200 kilowatt hours, and 1.7 cents at an average of 400 kilowatt hours a month.

With proper cost accounting, such as has eliminated wasteful investment and expenditure in competitive industries, rates based on these costs would unquestionably prove of financial advantage to the companies themselves. In fact, there is much evidence to support the belief that eventually residential electric rates will be appreciably lower than these figures would indicate. The full possibility of lower rates has yet to be given a thorough test.

The effectiveness of public competition in reducing the rates charged by private companies has been demonstrated in too many cities to be longer open to question. In Washington, Cleveland, St. Louis, and more recently in Cincinnati, under this influence, residential rates have come down to levels far below those prevailing where regulation is the only means of public control. Canada offers even more striking evidence, especially in the story of Montreal. There, as the result of a small municipally owned distribution system in a separately incorporated residential section of the city, the great Montreal Light, Heat, and Power Company has steadily reduced its rates throughout the entire city until a residential use of 50 kilowatt hours a month costs only 3.2 cents per kilowatt hour. With larger residential usage the average rates correspond closely to those suggested in the Power Authority distribution-cost survey. On the basis of these rates the company has been exceedingly prosperous.

The effect of President Roosevelt's public yardstick program, which he has designated as a new national policy, is increasingly apparent in the revision of rate schedules in this country. The Tennessee Valley Authority is already a potent influence. Private utilities are being forced to change their reactionary attitude. Perhaps the most interesting instance of the effect of this pressure on the private power interests is to be found in the very recent indication that the great power combine which provides more than 75 per cent of all the electricity sold in New York State is anxious to compromise on the basis of the contract plan which has resulted in rate reductions in Washington, D. C. The immediate cause of this change of attitude has been the decision of the LaGuardia administration in New York City to go swiftly forward with plans for a municipal plant to serve a section of the city.

Behind the present move, however, there is a coordination of federal, state, and city governments which is the result of a remarkable concatenation of political circumstance. If pressed with the support of public opinion this may prove to be a political revolution which will free government forever from the menace of monopolistic control of the necessities of modern living. Popular understanding of its significance is of the highest importance if the power interests are not to obtain a mere truce in which to reform their lines against the time when political reaction in one or more branches of government may relieve them of this pressure. The essential matter is that no professed readiness of the companies to compromise shall be allowed to weaken the development of machinery for public competition. Such competition will remain the only assurance that small consumers of electricity may always get their current at the lowest possible rates. It will be their guaranty against political shifts which might again give the private utility monopoly free rein in establishing rates adaptable to a new period of speculation in utility securities. As such it may well be considered a protection to the honest investor as well.

New York City, at the moment, seems to be the focal point in the fight to curb the exploitation of the power combine. As I write, another center of conflict is about to develop in the national capital, where the United States Senate will again be asked to decide whether the State of New York is to be allowed to go forward with its great public power project on the St. Lawrence River. Meanwhile, in the Southeast, President Roosevelt's Tennessee Valley Authority is powerfully advancing against stubborn resistance.

If the people can be assured a permanent foothold in these two great publicly owned hydroelectric power developments, operated by authorities empowered to make public competition effective, the possibility of political reaction causing a setback to the public power program will be greatly diminished. Every great forward step in the direction of public ownership of electric power definitely renders reaction less likely by weakening the forces responsible for selfish political manipulation.

In an Early Issue

Social Security in Great Britain

by Raymond Gram Swing

Second in a series of articles, of which Mr. Stewart's on the opposite page is the first, analyzing the various programs for social insurance suggested for this country, and comparing them with established systems abroad.

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Security Versus Mathematics

By MAXWELL S. STEWART

Washington, January 8

IN a bold and vigorous message President Roosevelt has asked Congress to provide security for the American people. Five years of unprecedented depression have not only dramatized the need for such action, but have virtually destroyed such haphazard means of security as previously existed. Not only have we uncounted millions of men and women who may never again find employment in private industry, but a large part of these have exhausted or lost the savings of a lifetime. Meanwhile, year by year an increasing number and proportion of our population are to be found in the older age groups, at a time when the opportunities of self-support for such individuals are steadily diminishing. Health protection has been notoriously inadequate. Relief at best has proved an unsatisfactory stop-gap measure; at worst it has added to the graft and corruption of present-day political life.

To meet this intolerable situation it has become evident that something far more audacious and comprehensive than unemployment insurance is needed. President Roosevelt has recognized this in presenting what he terms the "American" plan for security. His program, largely the product of the Committee on Economic Security appointed last June, envisages security of three types: (1) the guaranty of a livelihood through the better use of our national resources; (2) protection against the burden of such hazards as can be borne by society as a whole; (3) adequate housing. While the details behind these broad generalizations are not yet available, the President apparently has in mind a closely integrated plan which would include unemployment insurance for those now employed in industry, a permanent government-works program for the employables, old-age pensions, health and maternity protection, a housing program, and probably some form of old-age insurance. Unemployables who do not fall into one of the above categories are to be cared for, as previously, by the local communities.

In some respects the program is an inspiring one. The basic assumptions of Mr. Roosevelt's "American" way of doing things are a far cry from the anachronistic "American plan" of local self-help which President Hoover defended to the bitter end. For the first time we have a definite acceptance of the view that the rights of individual citizens should take precedence over profits. This does not mean that the President has adopted a program in any sense inimical to the profit system. An increasing number of business leaders have become convinced not only that some form of social insurance is necessary to appease popular unrest, but that it represents the most economical means of dealing with unemployment and destitution, and of stabilizing the economic mechanism. Particularly influential in effecting this change of viewpoint have been the statistics prepared by Abraham Epstein, showing that after allowance is made for the difference in population, the United States expended approximately 20 per cent more than Great Britain in caring for its unemployed in 1933, although the aid given by the British was from two to three times as adequate. Moreover, largely as a result of its system of social insurance, Britain's level of business activity has been maintained at a higher point than that of any other important industrial country.

This is not to say, however, that business leaders are agreed on a plan for carrying out their new views. In general they seem to favor national as against state legislation on the ground that it would be more efficient, and in the hope of thereby avoiding what they consider the evil of pooled reserves. They envision a federal scheme based on the principles of the Wisconsin Plan, which sets up for each company segregated reserves available only for the employees of that firm. It is argued that if each concern is forced to bear the cost of its own unemployment—and only its own—it will have a special incentive to avoid needless shutdowns and to lessen unemployment. The weakness of this plan lies in its failure to provide for the inequality of risks inherent in different types of business; strictly speaking it is not an insurance but a system of unemployment reserves.

Despite the preference of business, the Administration appears to look with slight favor on any form of unemployment insurance to be administered at Washington. It is asserted that a federal-state scheme, in which a federal levy on payrolls is used to induce the states to pass unemployment acts, not only would be more likely to stand up in the courts but would probably give more adequate security than any national legislation that could be passed at the present time. As a guiding principle in the framing of such state laws, the Administration appears to favor a system of pooled reserves such as is found in both the so-called Ohio Plan and in the bill recently introduced into the New York Legislature. While this scheme is open to the objection that in effect it subsidizes the weaker firms, and fails to give the workers in the stronger establishments a full return on the money which they pay in, it unquestionably gives a higher standard of protection than the Wisconsin Plan. And it is a genuine insurance measure, if insurance be conceived of as a scheme based on actuarial principles.

Far-reaching though the President's program undoubtedly is, it falls short of full security for any of the groups involved. Under an actuarial form of insurance no provision can be made in the unemployment scheme for the ten to twelve million who are at present without jobs. The President indicated that three and a half million of these may be taken care of by a government-works program which is soon to be established. To qualify for this, however, a worker must be face to face with actual destitution and must overcome the hurdle of some sort of means test. Moreover, state-enacted insurance legislation is bound to be very uneven in quality. Advanced industrial states such as New York may be expected to adopt relatively satisfactory schemes based on the principle of pooled reserves, while others, particularly in the South, if they adopt insurance laws at all, are almost certain to pass inferior and discriminatory legislation. Even the best of the proposed state acts would be ineffective in an emergency like that of the past five years. In a major crisis reserves would soon become

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exhausted, benefits would be suspended or drastically curtailed, leaving the situation much as it is at present. Under the most advanced of the suggested state laws benefits would be available only for from sixteen to twenty-six weeks and would equal approximately 50 per cent of the regular wages, with a maximum of $15 a week. To speak of security at $7 to $12 a week is to indulge in brazen deception at the expense of the millions of underprivileged who have borne the brunt of the present crisis.

Dissatisfaction with the Administration's program crystallized in the National Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance held in Washington on the week-end of January 5-7. This conference also stressed security, but in terms radically different from those used by the President. As a standard of security the congress indorsed the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance bill introduced in the Seventy-fourth Congress by Representative Lundeen of Minnesota. The terms of this bill are so drastically opposed to all other social-insurance measures that comparison is difficult. The actuarial principle of insurance is definitely discarded. Security for the individual is held paramount to all other values. From this it follows that the hazards incident to modern life, whether owing to seasonal or cyclic fluctuations in trade, inefficient business management, accidents, sickness, maternity, or old age, should, so far as possible, be borne by society as a whole rather than by individuals or special economic groups. Since wages, in general, are definitely below a security level, the Lundeen bill provides that the cost of protection shall be met exclusively out of levies on incomes of over $5000, gifts, and inheritances.

The Lundeen proposal defines security in terms of adequate living standards rather than as mere subsistence. On the assumption that men and women unemployed for reasons beyond their control have needs that are at least the equivalent of those of employed persons, the bill provides that benefits "shall be equal to the average local wages" in the workers' normal employment, but in no case shall they be less than $10 a week plus $3 for each dependent. Workers in part-time employment shall be allowed enough to bring their total compensation up to the specified minimum, which shall be increased in conformity with any rise in the cost of living. Payment is to be made to all workers over eighteen years of age without discrimination because of occupation, race, sex, citizenship, political affiliation, past participation in industrial disputes, or refusal to work at less than average local wages. A third feature of the bill is a somewhat unusual provision for administration by workers' representatives under rules prescribed by the Secretary of Labor.

Needless to say, the Lundeen bill, though indorsed by 6 state federations of labor, 2,400 A. F. of L. locals, and 65 city councils, is vigorously opposed not only by business leaders but by the vast majority of experts in the social-insurance field. Objections to it center chiefly around the looseness with which it is drawn, its doubtful constitutionality, its denial of actuarial principles, and its cost. Some critics even go so far as to assert that the bill "is not a serious legislative proposal, but a soap-box for propaganda directed against the present economic order and against its reform." That the bill is loosely drafted is admitted even by its most enthusiastic proponents, the excuse being that simplicity is necessary for rallying mass support. Correction of this defect would be relatively easy, but would not, one surmises, lessen the opposition. The charge of unconstitutionality is perhaps more serious, but invites the obvious reply that the Constitution, after all, is man made.

While the cost of the bill is necessarily problematical, it would admittedly be much greater, at the outset at least, than any other of the proposed schemes. At its inception the plan would cost, as Miss Van Kleeck pointed out at the congress, "exactly what is now being paid by the working class" as a result of the depression and other social hazards. To say that this cost is more than the nation can bear is saying in effect that the United States does not possess the human and physical resources necessary to give every individual the equivalent of the prevailing wage, an assertion disproved by the fact that we practically achieved this between 1917 and 1919 despite the huge wastes of war and profiteering. I. M. Rubinow, author of the Ohio Plan, estimates that the annual cost of the Lundeen bill, based on the present volume of unemployment, would be between twelve and twenty billion dollars. This would necessitate, he declares, the virtual confiscation of all income over $5,000 a year. Assuming the higher figure to be correct, what would be the effect of this huge expenditure on business conditions? Obviously not all of it would represent new purchasing power; at least a billion is now distributed in the form of relief, which could be dispensed with, while a considerable proportion of the remainder would otherwise have been spent by the well-to-do for luxury goods. But we know that at least a third of the income of families receiving over $5,000 a year is not expended for consumers' goods, and but a fraction is invested in capital goods at present. We may assume, therefore, an immediate increase in effective consumer purchasing power. This third, accepting Keynes's estimate that each dollar is utilized at least twice, would suffice to put ten million persons back at work at prevailing wages, thus saving over eight billion dollars on insurance and yielding that much increase in total purchasing power, which by this time might conceivably be required for capital investment. A distinction must therefore be made between economic and political practicability. That the bill will pass the present session of Congress is expected by no one. That it incorporates desirable standards for social insurance and would aid recovery is at least worthy of debate.

The differences between the two approaches cannot be too strongly stated. The Administration plan is frankly based on the assumption that the hazards of life can be adequately distributed by the application of actuarial principles. No mathematically-minded person who has dipped into the study of actuarial theory will deny its fascination. Nevertheless there are strong grounds for questioning whether such risks as industrial unemployment can in fact be reduced to mathematical formulas. A further weakness of the actuarial approach, moreover, lies in the fact that it treats money as an end in itself, and conceives of it as being stored up to meet future contingencies, whereas real wealth obviously is derived almost exclusively from current production. This would seem to imply that the problem is one of equalizing today's burdens rather than of saving for future hazards.

Among the other issues which must be settled prior to the formulation of a comprehensive program for social security are the following: (1) Should the cost of such protection be assumed by individuals directly, by industry, or by society as a whole through the taxing power of the

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federal government? (2) Should protection against unemployment and old age be extended to all persons, or merely to those whose personal resources, for one reason or another, have become exhausted? (3) All groups agree that work is preferable to a dole, but should anyone—employed in a public project or unemployed through no fault of his own—be granted less than a full living wage? (4) Should the agency which administers security measures be the industry, state, or federal government, or, as in the Lundeen bill, should the task be intrusted to the workers themselves? Each of these issues merits the fullest discussion, and must be settled before a permanent scheme of social insurance can profitably be established. For upon the nature of that decision rests the future of our country.

The Menace of Huey Long

II. A Monarch in Pajamas

By RAYMOND GRAM SWING

Baton Rouge, December, 1934

HUEY LONG in his well-tailored brown suit, ruling over his legislature, is one manifestation, but Huey in his green pajamas, holding court in his bedroom, is the natural man. He received the commander of the German cruiser Emden in pajamas, and created an international incident, since the visitor mistook a routine wardrobe for a deliberate insult. But everyone here understands that the green pajamas are Huey's ordinary apparel for political duties at certain hours of the routine day. He has been known to don them in the middle of the afternoon, climb into bed, and receive a stream of callers till late into the night. But the rule is to confine these pajama audiences to the evening. Thus he confers with, or rather declaims at, his henchmen. He does not stay in bed, but as the excitement wells up in him, he leaps out barefooted, and giving his pajama pants a yank, parades and rants like an orator before a vast audience. Hitler (not in pajamas) also cannot converse; he must orate. But Hitler looks through a solitary listener and goes into a near-trance, forgetting everything except the flow of ideas which pours from him. Huey does not ignore his listener; he stands over him shouting, prods him with a gesticulating finger, thumps him with an articulate fist. If the normal thing is to speak quietly and persuasively with a few men in a small room, then Huey either is abnormal or is acting. But his manner is not put on; this perpetual stump speaker is the real man.

At these sessions he is not imperious, for he lets the other fellow talk, too. His subordinates speak right up to him; they call him "Kingfish" (from Amos and Andy), and argue and disagree. But quickly he prevails, and he alone decides. A session with his workers may last for hours and cover a wide field. I sat in a corner of Huey's bedroom during a "conference" with a group of local leaders from an important parish. The topics discussed ranged from a decision to build a fence around a pasture at a state institution and the most insignificant details of patronage to important strategy for the next campaign. Huey knew the parish as well as any of his workers; the man's memory for a world of detail is almost mythical. There was no order of business, but in the course of two hours some twenty decisions were made. No matter how trite the issue, Huey burned and declaimed, now in bed, now parading the room in his pajamas and bare feet, hitching up the pajama pants, and waving his long windmill arms, striking all the attitudes familiar from his photographs.

Such a conference is a distressingly noisy business. One point settled, Huey climbs back into bed. He lies down flat—his bed is without a pillow—until the next point is mooted. An idea ignites in his mind; he sits up suddenly. Then as the fire develops, he leaps from bed. His men interrupt him, even differ from him, but he overwhelms them with the stentorian passion of his shouted arguments. At the end of the session, just as his henchmen are leaving, Huey recapitulates every decision reached. "I will do this; you will do that; this man is to be fired; that contract is to be pushed through." Twenty-odd decisions, rattled off verbatim.

Thus he carries the state's business in his head to the most trivial item. He knows every district, an incredible number of citizens by name and history and how they stand, and precisely what vote turned out for him in each district in the last elections. He knows what he will do in each parish, how he will finance this or that little matter, and so on to the woven whole of the commonwealth, which is there in his mind as though fully conceived in the abstract and being transformed into reality by his unquenchable passion. Everything springs from his brain, is molded by his will alone. When Huey leaves the state, his machine develops defects, his supporters slip away, his plans are clogged. No wonder, for he is functionally not a leader, he compels. And when he is not there no one else can subjugate for him. A man is not great, it has been said, who does not know how to delegate power. Huey, the embodiment of the appetite for power, probably will never have enough to be willing to yield any of it to another.

The scene in the bedroom is noisy; it also is profane. Anything Huey says in pajamas is likely to be punctuated with swear-words. Whether profanity is ordinarily a signal of contempt for manners or merely a substitute for better-expressed emphasis, it is both for Huey. His profanity is not imaginative or colorful; it is just ordinary vulgar cussing. Certainly he has no breeding, and no respect for it. Because his oysters were not fried to suit him he threw them on the floor at the restaurant of the Heidelberg Hotel the other day. He is one of those twisted spirits who must snarl or bawl at waiters. In this he differs from Hitler, who is a meek fellow to meet, and sees that you have an easy chair, and makes you feel that he is thinking of your comfort. Huey is rude as though impoliteness somehow were a necessitous kind of self-expression. Those around him are used to it; for them the Kingfish is only having his little joke.

The *leit-motif* in Huey's nature seems to be vindictive-

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ness. "Once disappointed over a political undertaking I could never cast it from my mind," he confesses in his autobiography, "Every Man a King." His history is a long recital of how he downed his enemies, and few of his victories for the people of Louisiana are free from the stigma of personal vengeance. Early in his career he was, or thinks he was, kept from being named assistant United States attorney through corporation influence. He has been a foe of the corporations ever since. He was just a plain small-town lawyer practicing in Shreveport, acquiring stock in small oil companies, when Standard Oil one day refused to carry competition oil in its pipelines. It kept him from becoming a millionaire. He says so in his autobiography. From that day began his life-long fight against Standard Oil, the state's greatest single industry. It was at a special session of the legislature called to pass a special tax on oil refining that Huey was nearly impeached. His autobiography makes no attempt to conceal his revenges, which are an organic part of the story. Characteristic of the man is that when he laid out his concrete highways for the state, he failed to link them up, so that the parishes which voted against him could be kept without benefit. Thus the vast system, one of his chief claims to service, was allowed for some time to remain a patchwork while Huey's opponents were duly punished, and only now is it to be joined into a unity. Most of his measures can be explained not only as reforms but as devices to bring pressure on his opposition or as heavy blows of retribution. He passes an income-tax law; at the time he is feeling the weight of the federal inquiry into the incomes of his leading supporters. Washington gives him a lesson on how to make an inquisition hurt. Huey at once amends his law so that he shall have the same power over recalcitrants in Louisiana. The Long machine takes over the assessment of property, and he can both raise assessments on his enemies and reduce those of his supporters. The other day his assessors reduced by $300,000 the evaluation of the New Orleans fair grounds recently bought by one of Long's chief lieutenants and his friends.

Huey seldom forgets a slight or forgives an injury. I was told that he carries with him a little book (a "son-of-a-bitch book") of those he is going to "get," with a note of their offenses. Whether or not he goes to the trouble of writing them down, he gets his man, as all Louisiana will testify. The newspapers can speak as eloquently as anyone, for they are now fighting in the courts his tax levy of 2 per cent on the gross receipts from advertising. This was a spite tax to punish the larger newspapers for having fought him, though most of them have been with him at some time or other, thanks to the factional seesaw of Southern politics. "The lyin' newspapers" are a by-word in Huey's vocabulary. "This tax," he states in one of his circulars, "should be called a tax on lying, 2 cents per lie." The papers are fighting the measure as a revival of the old British practice of licensing and taxing the press to restrain its freedom, and the brief now before the federal court is an important contribution to the history of the free press in America.

Implacable resentment underlying his terrific ambition for power marks Huey as the product of a humiliating and harsh childhood. One of nine children in a poor village family, son of a farmer who forced him to work long hours on the farm, he records in his autobiography: "Rising before the sun we toiled until dark, after which we did nothing except eat supper, listen to the whippoorwills, and go to bed." He adds: "My every sympathy has gone out to those who toil." Every Sunday he had to go to Sunday school, church, young peoples' meeting, and church again, and at midweek to prayer meeting. He learned his Bible thoroughly, and recently said publicly that science had not succeeded in refuting a statement in it. He knows much of it by heart, and held a contest recently with the junior Senator from Louisiana. Overman undertook to recite more from Shakespeare than Huey could recite from the Scriptures. After three hours neither had exhausted his memory, and Huey remarked that everything worth remembering from Shakespeare had already been said in the Bible. (For political purposes Huey is still openly a Baptist in the northern Protestant parishes, and was even slyly sympathetic with the Klan when it enjoyed a brief revival a few years ago. In the southern Catholic parishes he is a paragon of religious tolerance.)

His enforced churchgoing during his hard regimented childhood may explain his present exuberantly impious vocabulary. Certainly he was a rebellious boy. Twice he tried to run away from home. By sixteen, when it was clear he could not be sent to college, he got a job as salesman and traveled through the district tacking up signs on trees and holding baking contests to advertise a lard substitute. Once he dropped out of salesmanship for four months' schooling in Shreveport. He was given a better job, and admits he lost it because he did not work regularly or "worry about his expense account." A year later he had five months' law study between jobs at the University of Oklahoma. At nineteen he married a Shreveport girl who had won one of his baking contests. In another year of salesmanship over a large territory he accumulated a small nest egg, borrowed a few hundred dollars from his brother, and entered Tulane law school, determined to finish the course in a year. He studied day and night, till he became as thin as a skeleton, but he passed his bar examination at twenty-one. That was the education of Huey Long. Poverty, the want of privileges, the ambition to push ahead, all these are familiar factors in many American lives. But in Huey Long they burned his soul. Those who possessed while he suffered privation are now the ones he is determined to penalize. And at the same time he will make it simpler for poor young people to obtain the education he could not have.

He is uneducated and devoid of culture today, but let there be no mistake, he is a precociously intelligent man. His chief, perhaps his only intellectual interest is the law. America has more polished lawyers but it knows few today with greater talent. He has been praised by Chief Justice Taft and Justice Brandeis for briefs before the Supreme Court. Almost fabulous tales are told of how he will sit up all night preparing a brief that has been too much for his colleagues, and win his case in court the next morning. He is not a trial lawyer; it is the abstractions of the law which absorb him. And he has the strength to work year in and year out with little sleep, ceaselessly at it. The mind which grasps swiftly the abstruse points of law seizes as swiftly on the essentials of knowledge. He knows the smallest details of the business of the port of New Orleans (second largest in America), of banks, of industries he has had

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to study. His is a mastering as well as a masterful mind, which goes far to explain the unstinting admiration of his followers. They are used to his bad manners, they forgive the ruthlessness of his political methods, they condone the corruption of his regime, they overlook his innumerable impetuous blunders, because the man has the gift of an amazing, almost baffling mental ability. He towers over them, he out-smarts them, he knows. He is the hill-billy come into power, with the crudity of the hill-billy and his native shrewdness multiplied tenfold. Hill-billies have been the under-dogs of the South; now through Huey Long they are supreme in Louisiana.

I recall hearing soon after the Hitler revolution a speech of Goebbels's which was devoted to a long disquisition on how the Nazi government derived its power from the people. In its language it was curiously reminiscent of American speeches in the early days, when so much had to be said of political power deriving from the people. It dawned on me that for the lower middle class in Germany the Hitler regime represented, or seemed to represent, their being in power, and that it was their first real experience of power in the long history of Germany. Similarly, for his supporting public Long is the under-dog Southern farmer and villager, the suppressed, ignored, unprivileged person. He is the personification of their aspirations and their prejudices. And his appeal will be the same wherever he can display himself to unprivileged people. Resentment lies in the hearts of many because of the hardship they bore as children, the dreary hours of work they endured, the advantages they saw given to others but were not fated to enjoy. Hitler tapped that resentment in building up his great German host. Huey Long has tapped it in Louisiana and he is confident that he can tap it in forty-seven other states.

I have described Huey Long in the legislature, in the committee room, and in the green pajamas. I want to add a picture of action, of Huey Long during the banking crisis. While he was Governor few banks failed in Louisiana, not by reason of their inherent strength, but simply because he would not let them. He worked tirelessly behind the scenes, driving larger banks to give aid to weaker ones, persuading and even cudgeling them whenever he had the weapons. An important bank was in difficulties in Lafayette. The news reached Governor Long, and he succeeded in stopping the return for lack of funds of clearances from the Federal Reserve Bank. He called an immediate conference and hastily improvised a reorganization. Word of the trouble spread in Lafayette, and a run on the bank in the morning was inevitable. Huey motored through the night to Lafayette and was the first to enter the bank when it opened. He took up his place in the directors' office and commanded that every depositor who came to withdraw funds should be shown in to him. The next arrival was a lumberman with a check for $17,000. He was startled to be shown into the presence of the Governor.

"I'm trying to save this bank," Huey explained.

"I don't like this reorganization," grumbled the lumberman. "I'd feel safer if I had my money." Huey explained that the reorganization was essential and would be a success, but that the bank had only $190,000 on hand to meet demands. "You want your money and I want mine. The state has $200,000 in this bank. If you present your check I'll present mine, and mine comes first because I was here ahead of you."

"You mean I'll get nothing?" asked the lumberman.

"No, I mean that if you leave your money in the bank, we'll both get what's coming to us." Huey won, and he won similarly with every large depositor who showed up that day. The bank succeeded in staying open until the national closing of all banks.

A still graver crisis arose when one of the large banks of the state was about to liquidate for want of $5,000,000, a sum too large to be found locally. If the bank had been liquidated, the financial structure would have toppled over throughout the state. Five leading bankers in New Orleans met and decided that a state-wide moratorium was the only possible solution. They trailed off to Huey's hotel suite and told him so.

"Do you mean to tell me that you blankety-blank so-and-so's want a moratorium?" shouted Huey. "Well, you're not going to get it." The bankers insisted. They simply couldn't raise $5,000,000. Huey let loose a further volley of abuse. Then he called in Joe Messina, his bodyguard. His eyes were bulging, as they do when he is excited.

"Joe, have you got your revolver?"

"Yes."

"Is it loaded?"

"Yes."

"Then you stay guard on these blankety-blanks, and if one of them tries to leave this room before I come back, you shoot the blankety-blank and shoot to kill."

Huey rushed to his office and began telephoning to New York. A nationally known New York banker thereupon hurried to Washington, and in two days the $5,000,000 had been found. The five leaders of New Orleans finance were not kept under cover of Joe Messina's gun for the whole two days. That evening Huey paroled them under pledge not to mention the word moratorium to anyone.

This incident reveals the kind of courage which is a disregard of consequences in getting something done, and is innate in the man. But his enemies will not concede him the other type of courage, fearlessness of bodily injury. He is kept closely guarded, day and night. No doubt about it, he is afraid of being attacked, and a man who is the personification of vindictiveness may well be. Politics in Louisiana are at that high pitch of emotion where one either detests or worships, where no balance of judgment is possible, and where life is lived on the fringe of violence. Huey's friends will tell you that time and again hostile crowds have been incited to assassinate him. His enemies say he is a physical coward. What neither faction appears to realize is that of all human beings a dictator most needs protection. Huey rules by the dictator's twin forces of fear and approval. The fear he engenders in others in the end rules him. The stronger he is, the more he will have to be shielded. During the vice inquiry in New Orleans he did not leave the committee room except between armed militiamen in military formation, while the city snickered. But New Orleans was mistaken and Huey knew. He already is consigned to the dictator's special domain of fearfulness. His bodyguard is the final proof that democracy in Louisiana is no more.

[*The third and concluding article in Mr. Swing's series on Huey Long will appear next week.*]

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In the Driftway

WHAT is probably the finest piece of prose in the English language lies before the Drifter as he writes. Although he has a point to make about it, he enjoys quoting it merely for its own sake. It is, of course, from Hamlet's speech to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern:

> What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

These sentences, "like the morning star . . . bright and musical," have been thoroughly well known to English readers for a couple of centuries anyway. Their cadences are as familiar as nursery rhymes or certain portions of Holy Writ, and as with those other well-worn adjuncts of common speech—or at least common quotation!—they are familiar less for their sense than for their sound. It is the tune that we know so well.

* * * * *

THE Drifter was surprised and respectfully indignant, therefore (for he is respectful of scholarship even when it injures his most cherished possessions), to note, in the new Cambridge University Press "Hamlet," edited by J. Dover Wilson, a wholly unfamiliar rendering of these famous words. Mr. Wilson, using as his source the Second Quarto "Hamlet," published in 1605—eleven years before Shakespeare's death—punctuates the passage as follows:

> What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god . . .

and so on. The punctuation which makes the familiar tune to us is taken from the First Folio, published in 1623. And Mr. Wilson has many scholarly comments which seem to indicate cogently that the quotation as he points it makes more sense than it does with the Folio pointing. The Drifter would not presume to argue with so eminent an authority, and if the dates are correct—there is not the slightest reason to doubt them—Mr. Wilson has everything on his side. Nor is his rendering by any means unpleasing. Its climax is as powerful, its words are the same. But it is not the same song.

* * * * *

IF the Drifter were minded to be pedagogical, he would offer this whole matter to the young as a lesson in the rhythms of prose. A mere shifting of commas (in our familiar version the exclamation marks could be replaced with commas easily enough) entirely changes the sound of a passage. But school does not keep today, and the children may file out quietly. Before they go, however, those of them who are literarily minded might like one more quotation. "Hamlet," in its earliest published form, appeared two years before Mr. Wilson's Second Quarto, in 1603. This is a garbled and incomplete version of the play which nobody understands very well. Perhaps it was played thus, and its author improved it later; perhaps it was taken down incorrectly by an incompetent scribe from the spoken lines. At any rate, the famous passage is quite unrecognizable. Hamlet says:

> Yes faith, this great world you see contents me not,
> No nor the spangled heavens, nor earth nor sea,
> No nor Man that is so glorious a creature,
> Contents not me, no nor woman too, though you laugh.

Yet this is exactly the same sense, the same idea that is being conveyed. Nothing is lacking except the rich language, the high imagination, the bold strong music. The two quotations are just alike in idea; they differ merely in that one could be written by any hack prosodist and one is incomparable. There is a very complicated lesson in this, but the Drifter, having dismissed the class, is not obliged to point it out.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Mr. Mencken Has the Last (to Date) Word

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Mr. Villard, I fear, is simply suffering once more his old experience of seeing a Utopia blow up. First prohibition was to cure the drink evil, and then, when prohibition only made it worse, it was to be cured by repeal. It will actually survive until the end of time. The most we can ever hope to do is to keep it within reasonable bounds. My belief is that the licensing system, which has obvious defects but is at least frank and honest, is working to that end much better than prohibition, which was only a silly begging of the question.

Mr. Villard's statistics will hardly bear analysis. Let us turn, for example, to those he cites from Nassau County, New York. They show that there were 114 automobile accidents in the county during the first five months of 1934, as against 41 during the same months of 1933, an increase of 73, or nearly 180 per cent. But in the next line they show that "the increase of drunken drivers who have come into contact with the police" was but 25 per cent for New York as a whole.

What are we to make of this? Has Nassau gone on a gigantic communal jag, confined to the county limits, or do we simply confront a *general* increase in automobile accidents? The latter theory, it seems to me, is by far the more plausible. For some reason undetermined—but it probably has to do with recent changes in the speed laws—there has been an increase in such accidents all over the country. But that there has been an even greater increase in accidents due to drink is certainly not proved.

As an old journalist Mr. Villard should know how such statistics as he relies upon come into being. The newspapers discover that there is an increase in automobile accidents, and demand violently that the cops do something about it. The cops, loath to admit that their own clumsy regulation of traffic may be responsible, or perhaps honestly unable to determine the cause, put the blame on the nearest whipping-boy, which now happens to be John Barleycorn. So thousands of persons are charged with drunken driving who would have been passed over politely a year ago, and there is a new set of horrible statistics to entertain the innocent. This benign process, as every

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newspaperman knows, is now going on from end to end of the United States.

But such dubious statistics cannot cover up the plain fact that the American people, with endless supplies of alcohol available almost everywhere, are drinking more soberly than under prohibition. There was naturally some orgiastic boozing immediately after repeal, and it is still going on among the anthropoids earmarked by God to die of the jimjams, but the great majority of Americans are using their new-won liberty in a discreet and civilized way, and if reformers only let them alone they will probably do even better hereafter.

Baltimore, December 31 H. L. MENCKEN

A Retraction from Mr. Sinclair

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

On November 28, 1934, there appeared in your magazine an article by myself called The Future of Epic. In a portion of this article I stated that "on the Sunday before election day every Negro preacher in Los Angeles received $50 to preach a sermon against me."

I have made an investigation of this matter and I find that this statement was ill-advised, and I desire to withdraw it. I also desire that all newspapers and magazines which copied this portion of my article be good enough to print this letter. The statement is true concerning a number, but is not true concerning all preachers, and I apologize to those preachers who have suffered because of this article and who are not involved in any way.

I have had the pleasure of meeting the Reverend William A. Johnson, who is the pastor of Trinity Baptist Church of Los Angeles, and I have found him to be a man who does not indulge in politics in his church; he did not preach any sermon against me nor did he receive any compensation from any political group, nor has he preached any political matters in his church at any time.

Los Angeles, December 28 UPTON SINCLAIR

Who Was This Euripedes, Anyway?

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

It is the end of a long day, a day spent reading freshman themes. The freshmen have been reading Greek dramas, and their papers are conscientious if somewhat bewildered summaries of such masterpieces as the "Agamemon" of someone called Aechylus, or the "Edepus" of someone named Sophocleis. Some possibly have preferred the "Lisastrata" of one Aristophones; others the "Media" of Euripedes.

I pick up *The Nation* of December 19 and turn to the Drifter's column to learn of the course of reading pursued by poor John Stuart Mill. He too, I learn, read Euripedes, no doubt with more profit than that derived therefrom by Iowa freshmen.

The point is: Was the Drifter's "Euripedes" a printer's error? (I know he is a man of honor, and I shall believe it if he says yes.) Or does he, like the Iowa freshman, have occasional lapses from orthographical grace—less frequent no doubt—but none the less lapses?

Grinnell, Iowa, December 21 CARL NIEMEYER

[The Drifter, being a man of honor, deposes and says that he differs from Professor Niemeyer's freshmen in that he does

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know how to spell Euripides and they do not. Nevertheless, he wrote on his copy "Euripedes," and read it in proof, after which it was read by *The Nation's* proofreader, who also knows how to spell it, and a number of other editors ditto. What this means about their intellectual caliber, not to mention their orthographical competence, he leaves to Professor Niemeyer to decide.—Editors The Nation.]

The Robins-Gras Case

To the Editors of The Nation:

In a unanimous decision which may be an important precedent in labor cases, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York has granted a new trial to Harold Robins and André Gras, railroaded to prison for their militant activity in last winter's hotel strike. Last April they were convicted on the charge of assaulting a non-union chef.

The reversal of their conviction came after Robins and Gras had served eight months of their sentences. The decision severely castigates the trial judge, Joseph E. Corrigan, for "sarcastic characterization of the defendants;" the suspicions he cast on the defendants' alibis, his failure to discuss discrepancies in the testimony of hostile witnesses, and the "plain import" of Corrigan's attempt to "indicate to the jury the court's opinion that Robins had been employed as a strong-arm man by the union."

Formed at the request of the defendants after their conviction, the Robins-Gras Defense Committee was constituted by the Provisional Committee for Non-Partisan Labor Defense, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party Opposition, the Workers' Party of the United States, the General Defense Committee of the I. W. W., and other organizations. It is a matter of record that the International Labor Defense and other Communist organizations refused to participate in the defense. Almost every progressive union in New York gave moral and material support to the case. The volunteer lawyers who prepared the very able brief were Abraham Abramowitz, of the Socialist Lawyers' Association, and Louis Glickhouse. The *Law Journal* considered the decision sufficiently important to devote to it three columns on the front page of the December 20 issue.

In almost any other case the unanimous decision on appeal would assure that there would be no further attempt to convict the defendants. We have no doubt, however, in view of the hostile attitude of the Hotel Men's Association, that there will be a new trial.

The heavy costs of the appeal have not yet been met, and money is also needed for the new trial.

New York, December 28 Felix Morrow

Free Press in Cleveland

To the Editors of The Nation:

For nearly six months the Cleveland Newspaper Guild has been negotiating a contract with the Cleveland *News*. At one time it appeared that there would be a strike before any contract could be signed. But without going into the details, which you will find in the next issue of the *Guild Reporter*, I may say that an agreement was finally reached and the contract was signed on December 20 of this year.

There had been a good deal of bitterness during the negotiations, caused largely by one Joseph C. Hostetler, a law partner of Newton (TVA) Baker and the attorney for the publisher. After the strike threat Mr. Hostetler, who, incidentally, represents all three of Cleveland's newspapers, disappeared from the negotiations and with him went a great portion of the disagreement between the two sides.

The Cleveland Newspaper Guild was prepared to praise the publisher to the various labor organizations in the city for signing the first guild contract in the city. But he wanted no story in his paper or in any of the other papers. This is the day after the signing of the contract and there has been no story in any Cleveland paper with one exception. The Cleveland *Press* (Scripps-Howard) printed a brief story in its first edition. This was quickly killed. The United Press was given a story and a kill was sent out a few hours later from Cleveland. I do not know that it was put on the national wire. The Associated Press sent out a story today after the *Press* published its first-edition story. The guild furnished the Associated Press with a story a few minutes after the contract had been signed. No story was given to the A. P. by the publisher of the *News*.

And so you can understand our pardonable disgust when Elisha Hanson raises that cry of the "freedom of the press" at Washington.

Cleveland, December 21 A Clevelander

George Moore

To the Editors of The Nation:

I am preparing the Life and Letters of the late George Moore for publication in 1935. As many individuals in America have been in correspondence with Mr. Moore in the past, I am anxious to obtain from them either the use of the originals or copies of his correspondence with them. If the originals are sent to me, care of the Kildare Street Club, they will be carefully protected and returned to the owners when I have finished with them.

Dublin, Ireland, January 4 J. M. Hone

Contributors to This Issue

Frank P. Walsh is chairman of the Power Authority of New York State.

Norman Alexander is the pseudonym of a former newspaperman who in recent years has been teaching journalism and contributing to magazines. He is not at present a member of the Newspaper Guild.

Stuart Chase, a director of the Labor Bureau and a frequent contributor to *The Nation*, is the author of "The Economy of Abundance" and of other provocative books on current economic problems.

Ludwig Lore, formerly editor of the New York *Volkszeitung*, now conducts a column headed "Behind the Cables," in the New York *Post*.

Harlow Shapley, a distinguished astronomer, is director of the Harvard Observatory.

Benjamin B. Kendrick, professor of history at the North Carolina College for Women, collaborated with Louis M. Hacker in writing "The United States Since 1865." From 1930 to 1934 he was chairman of the Southern Regional Committee of the Social Science Research Council.

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Labor and Industry

Not Fit to Print

By NORMAN ALEXANDER

THE American Newspaper Guild celebrated its first birthday last month by trying out its lungs and muscles with such vigor that 1,200 publishers felt called upon to defy the government, in effect, and perhaps to repudiate the New Deal in an effort to arrest the lusty infant's precocity. With 8,000 editorial-department employees enrolled in more than a hundred units throughout the country, the guild in the first month of its second year can claim credit for wage and hour concessions in many cities, contracts in Philadelphia and Cleveland, and a closed-shop agreement in Madison, Wisconsin. It has taken several charges of collective-bargaining obstruction before federal and regional labor boards, winning decisive support in one. Reporters have discarded their traditional aloofness to walk the picket lines and have taken boycott measures against unfair employers. They have furnished money and manpower to aid a sturdy strike of editorial staff workers. The American Federation of Labor and independent unions have officially recognized an ally. Guild leaders have dramatically challenged the impartiality of the National Recovery Administration.

While romantics among them wept into their beer, youngsters in unionism moved rapidly toward labor leadership. Working newspapermen had at last recognized their kinship with the printers who converted their copy into type and the miners who read what they wrote. Unwittingly, publishers themselves had routed many a beleaguered individualist from his last stand, directed the legendary cynicism of the Fourth Estate into new channels, and by their bungling resistance fortified the guild. A review of the organization's first year shows how it was done.

When the codes for fair competition were first being drafted, and the government specifically notified employees that they were to be heard, there was no organization from the editorial rooms qualified to offer facts and figures to balance those of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association. On December 15, 1933, representatives of organized groups in four cities formed the American Newspaper Guild in Washington. The movement quietly gathered momentum until February, when the first show of strength came in opposition to the appointment of Ralph Pulitzer as NRA administrator for the newspaper code. Printers and editorial workers recalled that a few years earlier Mr. Pulitzer had dealt the death blow to their old friend the New York *World,* and that Heywood Broun, now the national president of the guild, had told them then that the paper and their jobs might have been saved if the news staff had been organized. In the face of their protests Mr. Pulitzer withdrew.

Among the first to oppose the guild openly was, as might be expected, William Randolph Hearst. R. L. Burgess, who had left the San Francisco *Examiner* to free lance after seven years of apparently satisfactory service, returned as an editorial writer in 1933. The *Examiner* chapter elected him as its first chairman, and a few days later a telephone call came from San Simeon ordering his dismissal. First economy and then inefficiency were given as the reasons, although there were no signs of general economy measures and little proof that the quality of Mr. Burgess's work had changed. When the guild asked the regional labor board to order Mr. Burgess reinstated in any capacity, John Francis Neylan, Hearst general counsel, refused to recognize that board's jurisdiction, protested that nobody could tell a publisher who was to write his editorials, and sneered at the Guilders that they were "barking up the wrong tree." "No, you are," Mr. Burgess retorted. "We're going the direction history is taking." The case went from San Francisco to Washington and back, to be dismissed for lack of evidence, but the outcome of the next Hearst-guild encounter gave meaning to Mr. Burgess's prophecy.

When the other Hearst paper in San Francisco, the *Call-Bulletin,* learned how Dean Jennings, rewrite man, intended to use his June vacation, dates were switched and he was forced to resign in order to attend the St. Paul convention of the guild. The National Labor Relations Board considered itself qualified to act, even though Elisha Hanson, counsel for the A. N. P. A. did not, and it ordered Mr. Jennings reinstated, adhering to that decision even after the NRA had been bullied into ordering the case reopened. When the board on December 27 asked the Compliance Division to remove the *Call-Bulletin's* Blue Eagle for ignoring the order, Howard Davis, chairman of the national code committee, sounded a five-alarm call to all publishers subscribing to the code to attend an undated meeting to combat this "usurpation of power."

With the test still to come in the Jennings case, Redfern Mason resigned from the San Francisco *Examiner* after he had been demoted from the post of music critic, where he had won the respect and admiration of readers in twenty-one years of service, to the hotel beat. As chairman of the *Examiner* guild chapter, he had just sent a letter to its members urging continuation of the fight against Joseph Knowland's Oakland *Tribune* across the bay. Three established *Tribune* men had lost their jobs when their guild activity apparently made Mr. Knowland suddenly aware of the need for "readjustment" and "economy." The guild went into action against the paper with sound trucks and handbills after radio stations had barred the controversy from the air.

There have been scattered guerrilla warfare against unionization of newspapermen and refusals to negotiate in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, and other sections. Only isolated injustices were clear-cut enough to get before boards set up to deal with them. Picketing began when S. I. Newhouse was accused of showing a prejudice against organization among employees of his Staten Island *Advance* and Long Island *Press.* An agreement was effected on the *Press* and the Staten Island

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case was then referred to the Newspaper Industrial Board.

Newark became the first real battleground in November after L. T. Russell, in a series of notices on the *Ledger* bulletin board, had displayed his bitter antagonism toward the guild. After threatening to weed out half the staff, Russell dismissed eight members of the Newark chapter. Forty-five editorial employees out of fifty-six promptly walked out, all but one resolving to stay on strike until the eight had been reinstated and the guild recognized. In the second month of the strike, when the guild agreed to accept the good offices of the regional labor board, Mr. Russell said it was too late, since he had completed a permanent working staff meanwhile. How well that skeleton staff was working was questionable in view of the quantity of "canned" matter which the *Ledger* printed. Circulation fell off heavily and some advertisers withdrew as the strikers put their case before the city in their own paper and by house-to-house visits.

Russell's erratic hiring and firing and the low wage scale, which he admitted when he discounted the dismissal of eight men as involving only $210 a week, are the subject of fantastic stories. The fight against him won the backing of even professional journalists. Some believed they had disposed of the guild argument when they pointed out that Russell is the exceptional publisher and that the majority who were friendly and fair toward their men should not be held liable. The answer to this was that it is precisely for dealing with the "exceptional publisher" in a solid front recruited from the more favored employees that a guild is necessary. An analysis of the guild's first year, however, seems to show that publishers like J. David Stern, who unhesitatingly signed a contract with employees of the Philadelphia *Record* and indicated that he would do the same on the New York *Post* as soon as income justified setting wage minimums, are more the exception than are the Russells.

The New York *World-Telegram,* which along with other Scripps-Howard interests has been jettisoning its reputation for liberalism in more ways than one, gagged at applying its editorial policy in its own shops. Remembering that the A. N. P. A., of which he is a member, had warned that contracts are "very dangerous," Roy Howard offered important concessions in extension of the five-day week, a severance-notice schedule, and a 5 per cent restoration of pay, but he refused to make written agreements with anyone but his own staff. The suggestion of the company-union principle was overwhelmingly rejected. "At a time when the urge for greater social justice is sweeping the world, no employer and least of all newspaper employers, whose efforts play so important a part in shaping national thought, can turn a deaf ear to any suggestions for bettering working conditions of any group of their employees," Mr. Howard told his staff.

Meanwhile lieutenants of Mr. Howard and other less avowedly liberal publishers resorted to backstairs methods of discouraging and thwarting organization. Readers who were told on a certain day that Heywood Broun's column had been eliminated because of its "triviality" were not deceived. Before his tireless efforts helped make the guild what it is today, it had been Broun's privilege to be trivial when he chose. Occasional friction within the guild has showed some publishers which of their employees they may depend upon for the kind of cooperation they demand, and in the words of Newark's Mr. Russell, they have proceeded to make it "very nervous" for the others.

The present problem of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association and the Newspaper Guild is to establish workable precedents for the solution of labor troubles. The varied interpretations of Section 7-a, the uncertain status and meaning of the "consent" clause in the newspaper code, and the weakness of machinery for jurisdiction and compliance make the task difficult. When publishers persuaded Donald Richberg to order Blackwell Smith to ask the Labor Relations Board to reopen the Jennings case, they made much of what they considered the unwarranted assumption of authority by the N. L. R. B. Smith must have discomfited them when his request recognized the N. L. R. B. as the "higher tribunal," implying the right of appeal. For they have insisted that all cases within their industry must end in the Newspaper Industrial Board. As constituted under the code, that board has four employer representatives, and four employee representatives selected by the government Labor Advisory Board. On even minor points of procedure the board has almost invariably been deadlocked along those lines. Provision is made for an impartial chairman who may cast the deciding vote, but labor recognizes this as compulsory arbitration, if there is no appeal.

Stalemate seemed inevitable in the recent hearing before this board of Alphonse Tonietti's charges that Generoso Pope had dropped him from *Il Progresso–Italo-Americano* because of his guild interests. From the publishers' previous behavior it is a foregone conclusion that any decision that penalizes member publishers will evoke renewed incantations to the "freedom of the press." Before then the public may have learned that this wolf cry can mean, as one newspaperman has remarked, "freedom to oppress."

The use that has been made of the phrase has robbed it of much of its holy ring. Perhaps it is significant that reporters in San Francisco have been so anxious to defend their right to organize. Most of them were required to participate last summer in an unprincipled strike-breaking campaign. Months later in New York Elisha Hanson mentioned the longshoremen's strike in connection with the Jennings case, adding that it would be unthinkable for a paper to take back a "disloyal" reporter at such a time. Some reporters who had been told to describe what they didn't see and to tell as fact what they knew to be lies acquired a different interpretation of disloyalty. Particularly did those who had in mind the resolution passed at the St. Paul convention pledging guild members to "strive tirelessly for integrity of news columns and opportunity to discharge their social responsibility; not stopping until the men and women who write, graphically portray, or edit news have achieved freedom of conscience to report faithfully, when they occur, and refuse by distortion and suppression to create, political, economic, industrial, and military wars."

Reporters who saw their colleagues called out on lawless vigilante raids began to wonder if trade unionism could be any more destructive of their "objectivity." Those who saw their superiors scorn the truth for which they had professed such a burning ardor, when it became necessary to defeat Upton Sinclair, began to doubt if the "regimentation" involved in organization could be any more harmful to creative talents.

Little wonder that the phrases uttered at the first hear-

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ing on editorial wages and hours in Washington, uncontradicted because the Newspaper Guild representatives had walked out in protest against NRA interference, sounded hollow to working newspapermen who sat alongside and conscientiously recorded them. In contrast to remarks about the happy employment of all competent men in Pennsylvania, about workers "so proud of their jobs that they spend most of their time off loafing around the shop," about "a zest for their calling that leaps over artificial barriers of time and schedule," the articulate dignity and realism of the newspapermen's withdrawal was refreshing and inspiring to some of us who witnessed it.

If newspapermen are decreasingly susceptible to blandishments about their professionalism, if the incense of printer's ink has lost some of its stupefying influence, the publishers have themselves to thank. Their tactics against the guild when they discovered that it was not just another social club were markedly lacking in finesse. Whatever justification there was for their fear, voiced for them by Marlen Pew in *Editor and Publisher*, that the "lefties" were in control was not primarily due to a careful study of Karl Marx and of labor movements. Until publishers blundered into teaching them what "class consciousness" meant, most newspapermen were as ready to scoff at the phrase as they were at "rugged individualism." If lines have been drawn, it is because publishers themselves, with notable exceptions, have revealed so completely how they intend to intrench established power that they have pushed to the left all but those who wilt before the benevolent smile, who regard recognitions of merit as favors, or who are calloused with indifference or despair.

A considerable element within the guild honestly believes that the aims of the guild and of the publishers are not incompatible, but there is a difference as to the means of reconciliation. The president of the St. Louis chapter resigned recently because he felt that strikes were unprofessional. A New York Guilder suggested in open meeting that the organization might well take a cue from recent events in Washington and seek "gentlemen's agreements" behind closed doors. "We're not that cynical yet," was the reply of Carl Randau, chapter president.

The present position of the guild leadership seems to be the only tenable one so long as the New York *Herald Tribune* prints editorials congratulating the San Francisco *Call-Bulletin* on its "courageous and successful stand" in defense of freedom of the press, and so long as Marlen Pew advocates a "professional guild whose power of moral suasion" would "establish, through fact-finding and the processes of conscience, good-will, and dignity, standards of working conditions, pay, and also competency and ethics that no publisher would dare to flout."

While publishers dare to flout the expressed wish of the President and of governmental agencies, the guild, without truculence but with determination, must continue to ask the Donald Richbergs how they propose to "convince the working newspapermen of the country that you are not their active enemy, militant enough to be willing, even, to set yourself in opposition to the President and violate one of his executive orders, in order to serve the publishers."

[*Next week: The Newspapers and Child Labor, by Dorothy Dunbar Bromley.*]

Labor Notes

Decision in Oil

FOR the first time in the history of the NRA, a labor board, the Petroleum Labor Policy Board, has ordered an employer, the Texas Company, to dissolve a company union. Like many other employers, the Texas Company reacted to Section 7-a by establishing a company union at its refinery at West Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Labor Policy Board, called in to determine a representation dispute, conducted an election and ascertained that a "heavy majority" of the workers were opposed to the company union and in favor of being represented by the International Association of Oil Field, Gas Well, and Refinery Workers (A. F. of L.). The board thereupon issued an appropriate certification to the effect that 74 per cent of the production employees of the West Tulsa Refinery "had duly chosen as their accredited representatives for collective bargaining" the international president and secretary of the trade union. Blandly disregarding both the referendum result and the board's certification based thereon, the employer proceeded to call for an election of representatives under the employee-representation plan. The excuse offered was that the plan would serve the needs of the minority group which stood opposed to representation by the trade union, but a close analysis of the plan reveals that it creates, in effect, a situation in which the minority can overrule the will of the majority in collective bargaining and in which the employer can impose a closed non-union shop upon the workers. The Labor Policy Board's decision states the issue in simple language: "Has the Texas Company the right to impose upon its employees, after they have freely expressed by secret ballot their choice as to representation for collective bargaining, an organization of the company's choosing? The answer is clear: the company has no such right." Having laid the theoretical groundwork, the board reaches this practical conclusion: "The employee-representation plan, having been rejected by the employees and having thereafter been imposed upon them by the company, therefore should be discontinued. . . . Its continued existence makes impossible the realization by the employees of the rights which are guaranteed to them under the NIRA and the petroleum code." Unfortunately, there is little reason to suppose that the Texas Company will comply with the decision and destroy the creature of its own making.

Toledo Carries On

SEVEN months after the Battle of Toledo, word comes that the working force of the Electric Auto-Lite Company is organized 100 per cent. Every worker in that plant carries a card in the Automobile Workers' federal union, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Progressives, under the inspiration of the American Workers' Party (now the Workers' Party of the United States), are in control of the local. The reactionary local leaders, who sought to sabotage the struggle of last May, have been discarded. When production fell some time ago, the company discharged 100 militants, in violation of the seniority clause of the contract. The union promptly sent the entire group as a committee to interview the management. When the committee of 100 stated in no uncertain terms that any breach of the contract would mean "a large-scale repetition of the battle of last May," the company capitulated. The group was reemployed in toto. The intelligent militancy used in Toledo gives some indication of what the A. F. of L. might have accomplished in the automobile industry had it not chosen to rely on the government.

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Books and Drama

Tugwell Explains the New Deal

The Battle for Democracy. By Rexford Guy Tugwell. Columbia University Press. $3.

REXFORD TUGWELL refers to himself in this book as the New Deal's goat. Fortunately he seems to be a pet goat. By a well-known operation for avoiding the agonies of thought, a personality has been substituted for a complex of ideas and policies, and our author has become the symbol for all that is held to be sinister and dangerous in the Administration. For a year and more Mark Sullivan has been pounding his jungle drum and weaving anti-Tugwell spells. Conservative editorial writers have counted that day lost when the nexus between Moscow and Tugwell was not viewed and reviewed with alarm. When he went abroad last fall, they felt that their charms and exorcisms were beginning to work, that Mephisto was on his way out. Imagine the consternation of the shamans to discover him on his return wallowing like a porpoise in the President's swimming bath at Warm Springs. A year of myth-making gone for naught.

In this book of essays the literate may find soon enough what Tugwell really does stand for. Here is his philosophy, his goal, his method, sharp as the nose on one's face, consistent and emphatic. There is no trace of sedition, sinister plotting, revolution, dogmatic radicalism, to be found in this man's mind at all. If anything, he is too tolerant and reasonable.

His central thesis is that free competition has failed as an economic provider, owing to technological progress. The abortive compound of monopoly and limited competition, plus ruinous free competition for farmers and little men, which usurped the old free market was rapidly becoming unworkable during the 1920's, and broke down altogether in 1929. In place of a flexible price structure, with prices tending to follow costs downward as technical efficiency gained, dams, barriers, rigidities have formed a monstrous structure of unbalanced prices. The railroads, power companies, steel manufacturers, and others have held their rates and prices, while farmers, unorganized for price maintenance, have watched the commercial values of their wheat and cotton go rushing over Niagara. When the farmer's prices fall, he tends to produce as much or more, in an attempt to keep his cash income from declining. This operates of course to pile up agricultural surpluses and drive prices even farther down. When the large industrialist, on the other hand, is faced with falling prices due to a threatened surplus, he begins instanter to produce *less*. He cuts down his force, flings canvas over batteries of machines, and gets ready to ride out the storm on his accumulated surplus. He seeks to hold the price level by creating an artificial scarcity, and only too often he succeeds. His competitors, if any, seem frequently to be governed by the same impulse.

The simplest explanation of the AAA is that it is an attempt to give to farmers that ability to hold prices which large sections of industry already possess, and thus to steam out one great gummy kink in the price fabric. Permanently, of course, it does not solve the problem.

All that has gone before March, 1933, Tugwell characterizes as the Old Order. He does not like it because of its perversion of human values, but that he discounts as the personal and perhaps sentimental judgment of one who was brought up amid the simple virtues of a pre-machine rural community. The real objection is that the Old Order finally flunked its pragmatic test, and will no longer work. If "natural forces" had had their way as in earlier depressions, the downward spiral would have dropped us into heaven knows what abyss. The closing of every bank was no more than a foretaste.

A new deal, in one form or another, was mandatory. It brought us out of the tailspin. Here and there it gave us a little boost. We come now to our author's theme song: the New Deal, in the form that it has taken under Roosevelt, is not a flight into regimentation and bureaucracy, but only a rediscovery of that democracy on which the Republic was founded. The Constitution of 1787 "was, in effect, a coup d'etat; it was adopted in contravention of the Articles of Confederation because the government set up by those articles was too weak, too decentralized, to meet contemporary economic necessities." Gradually, in the zest of conquering a continent, citizens came more and more to interpret the Constitution as defining a government which was "negative and arresting, not positive and stimulating. Its role was minor and peripheral. It was to prevent interferences with the competitive system. Behind that system was an invisible hand which beneficently guided warring business men to the promotion of the general welfare. . . . The jig is up. The cat is out of the bag. There is no invisible hand. There never was. If the depression has not taught us that, we are incapable of education." Competitive anarchy led to the regimentation of nine citizens out of ten—utter dependence on industry, with no economic security whatever—and finally to a resounding crash. The New Deal, in picking up the debris, is leading us back to the first interpretation of the Constitution—a weapon against economic disintegration. Democracy has been betrayed by industrial anarchy. Democracy and competition are not brothers but enemies. The New Deal is far from a perfect instrument, but it offers the mass of the people the closest approach to democracy they have had since the frontier closed.

I submit that this is a reasonable and logical doctrine. Personally I do not bother much about high-order abstractions like "democracy," "liberty," and "regimentation." What interests me is the specific effect of a given policy on the tangible behavior of individuals or groups. This is the only way I can make "democracy" or "freedom" come alive. But many people seem to feel the need of getting their large generalizations in order, and if Tugwell cannot convince them that the New Deal is not an assault on democracy and on the best in the American tradition, nobody can.

The various attempts of the New Deal to revive this conception of democracy are described in some detail. We find essays and speeches on the TVA, public works, the AAA, the NRA, conservation, land planning, the scientific method in politics, banking, gold, constitutional law, and, quite charmingly, a stirring plea for native wines. On the whole the Administration's goat seems to be thriving on his daily shower of tin cans. One observes that Mr. Tugwell is now actively out on the battle front instead of in the study.

Reading this book, and particularly the challenge to the future which rings from three or four of the essays, a challenge which stirs both the intelligence and the heart, we catch a glimpse of what the "thin red line" in Washington has accomplished since March, 1933. It has put integrity, courage, and intelligence back into a government sapped by a century of deference to the voracious exploiters and despoilers of a continent. To that new spirit at least one honest old gentleman in Washington has uncovered and bowed. "I'm a Tory. I don't believe in these new ideas. But never in my life have I seen a more gallant performance."

Tugwell is a radical in the sense that he has no faith in the workability of the Old Order. He is not a radical in the sense that he wants to socialize everything overnight. He is without dogmas and without prejudices, except a general and wholesome prejudice in favor of "human beings, as against

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the things human beings use." He calls himself an experimentalist and really believes in the scientific method as applied to economics. Therefore he has no plan to save the world—one of the few citizens of the Republic so empty-handed. But he is keen for facts, research, administrative technique, *knowledge,* to handle this situation and that, as slices of the Old Order fall into the sea. He is not primarily interested in attacking the profit system. He is interested in driving foundations for a new system as capitalism relinquishes its responsibility. (Already it has relinquished responsibility for the provisioning of a fifth of the American population, and has failed to produce, in the last five years, $300,000,000,000 worth of goods for which the physical plant was fully equipped.)

Probably, within the next decade, at least a third to a half of all economic activity must become a collective enterprise, not because Tugwell wants it or the President wants it or the Communist Party wants it, but because the power age demands it. To sweat and work and plan for that gigantic transfer is more useful and more realistic than calling portly gentlemen hard names. Perhaps Tugwell, like many of the Brain Trust, does not fit into the classification of radical versus conservative at all. He is an engineer of transition from automatic capitalism to some new system.

STUART CHASE

Germany's Psychosis

The Tragedy of a Nation. 1918-1934. By Prince Hubertus Loewenstein. The Macmillan Company. $2.25.

OF the numerous books on Germany which have come to my attention during the last year this is one that is interesting because it is different. As the descendant of one of the oldest families of Germany's wealthy Catholic nobility, Prince Loewenstein lived in close personal contact with the process of disintegration he describes. He was eight years old when the World War broke out, and was just unfolding to political consciousness when Weimar decided the way that the Reich was to go. A non-partisan student organization of which he was the leader developed in the young aristocrat a strong sense of social responsibility which led him gradually away from the Centrist Party to which every bond of family allegiance had bound him toward a catholicism of the spirit rather than of the church, a social philosophy which centered in the maintenance of republican institutions against National Socialist terrorism. His young idealism met with the first serious setback when he discovered that the semi-military Reichsbanner in which bourgeois democrats and Centrists stood shoulder to shoulder with the young Social Democrats and trade unionists who were the large majority of its members was not to become the avenging sword of the republic. Hitler's appointment to the Chancellorship convinced the farseeing young intellectual that there was no longer room in the Reich for a man who took his republicanism seriously. He turned his steps to Great Britain and there placed his gifted pen and his ability as a public speaker in the service of the fight against a system which was to him the antithesis of all that life had ever meant.

It is the tragedy of the German nation, says Prince Loewenstein, that "a man with so little personality and so few creative possibilities" could obtain absolute control over the German people; that this man dominates not only physical Germany but the German mind; that it was not only terror, not fear of punishment or other consequences, that turned the Reich into an authoritarian state, but the fact that a large majority of the German people is acting under the spell of a mass psychosis, following a pied piper under a blind compulsion.

Wickham Steed expresses the sense of the book in a single sentence when he says: "The story shows, perhaps more clearly than its author realizes, how feckless had been and were the men who established the German Republic at Weimar in 1918 without laying the foundation deep and sure or troubling earnestly to defend it against the myriad foes whom they left in almost undisturbed possession of the citadel." All that, it is true, has been said before, but always by radicals, left-Socialists, and Communists who fight the moral, social, and political aspects of fascism as incidental by-products of a deeper economic despotism. Prince Loewenstein sees the problem of National Socialism with other eyes, though he arrives, for the moment, at the same conclusion. Impelled by a deeply religious consciousness, he objects to National Socialism for its forcible suppression of the individual, for its fundamental irreligion, for its cruelty to those whose only crime is that they are of a different race—though he is unwilling to absolve the Jews in Germany from all blame for the misfortune which has overtaken them. He is as much opposed to the "so-called associations of irreligious people whose organizations were allied and supported by the Social Democratic Party" as to the "German Christians" of the Third Reich. He condemns the Communists for their negation of political democracy as much as he condemns Hitler for his philosophy of dictatorship.

With Italian fascism he has no serious quarrel. "Of fascism," he says, "it may be said that it at least tries to bring about a certain agreement in the interests of the classes. . . . I felt as certain then as I do today that fascism in Italy could endure without endangering the life of the nation. . . . There is in Italy the furthering and the beginning of historic tasks. . . . a movement to which even its opponents cannot refuse an acknowledgment of success." The chances are that Prince Loewenstein has few objections to the fascism of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, though he makes no reference to it in the pages of the book.

LUDWIG LORE

Report on the Universe

Through Space and Time. By Sir James Jeans. The Macmillan Company. $3.

THE hopelessness of keeping up with the contributions in science in this nervous age could not be more gloomily shown than by the details in this newest book by Sir James Jeans. But there is nothing that can be done about it. Discovery and analysis will not stop for the psychological convenience of those defeatists who, in their vanity, are worried that they cannot keep up. Books cannot be written that revise themselves automatically. Perhaps the best compromise is not to attempt to be on time; the popularizer should tread cautiously in active regions.

Sir James Jeans looks "through space and time" from a planet whose antiquity is depicted in a clear diagram (page 46) showing the succession of geological and life periods. He indicates vaguely that a billion years ago we had a solid crust to the earth, but that all is unknown, as the planet cooled out of chaos, a billion and a half years ago. Yet within the past year or so Miss Slouka and others have measured the ages of common rocks from western Canada and found them to be 1,750 million years old.

Again, Sir James tells of oil borings that go only "about eight thousand feet down," but several recent explorations have gone beyond ten thousand, even attaining the two-mile mark. The author, describing the upper atmosphere of the earth, tells of the Kennelly-Heaviside layer, which controls radio transmission, and the Appleton layer above it; but the two additional ionospheric layers found by Harvard investigators are apparently too recent for inclusion.

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Delays of this sort between the factory and the salesman can be pointed out in abundance. Some are not quite negligible—for instance, the statement that Eros is the asteroid that comes nearest to the earth. But the readers of "Through Space and Time" will lose little in comparison with their gain in knowledge of the universe, for the volume, like its predecessors, is creditably illustrated with photographs and brilliantly illustrated with word pictures.

The book is obviously tuned to its "juvenile auditory," as was the Royal Institution Christmastide lecture on which it is largely based. The mature readers of the earlier volumes by Jeans will gain little from this new volume, except in those chapters on sections of the universe not heretofore treated in detail—The Earth, The Air, The Sky. And for these subjects the general scientific reader can better turn to Stetson's more thorough and not difficult treatment in "Earth, Radio, and the Stars."

HARLOW SHAPLEY

The Old South and the New

America's Tragedy. By James Truslow Adams. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.

THE long series of events which began in 1619 when, as John Rolfe quaintly recorded, "Came in a Dutch man of warre that sold us twenty Negars," and which culminated in the American Civil War constitute the subject matter of "America's Tragedy." It is an old story so often told that upon picking up the book the reader will wonder what Mr. Adams can tell that is new. And, indeed, so far as historical data are concerned, he gives us nothing new. But Mr. Adams always brings a fresh point of view and a charming literary style to any subject he touches. A lover of all the arts, he is perhaps most devoted to the art of living. This devotion gives him sympathy for those planters of the Old South whose lives approached the Greek ideal more nearly than those of any other group in American history. True, this is more a traditional than a historical fact, but the wise historian while discounting tradition never ignores it.

In its most bland form tradition had it that there were just three well-defined classes in ante bellum society in the South—the rich planters, the Negro slaves, and the "poor whites." Research during the past two or three decades by such Southern scholars as Bassett, Phillipps, Craven, and Dodd, and by the Dutch scholar Den Hollander has pretty well exploded the myth. In 1860 there were only 347,525 slaveholders in the entire South and less than one-half of these owned more than four slaves. If each owner is assumed to be the head of a family of five, then only about one-fourth of the entire population had a direct interest in slaveholding.

The truth is that Southern society was composed of the normal imperceptible gradations which have always characterized American society in general. There were "poor whites" of an abnormally shiftless sort, poor in spirit, unambitious, woefully ignorant, sick with malaria and perhaps hookworm. Mr. Adams estimates this group as about 5 per cent of the total white population. This is a low estimate, but the number certainly did not exceed 10 per cent or about six hundred thousand people out of approximately six million. A million and a half of the Southern whites had a direct interest in slavery, but only a tenth of these belonged to "planter" families, if we take the ownership of twenty slaves as the minimum requirement for eligibility to that favored classification. However, if we deduct the million and a half members of slave-owning families and the six hundred thousand "poor whites" from the total white population, we have about four million people who were neither slave-owners nor "poor whites." To be sure very few of these were rich and all were white, but they were not "poor whites" in quotations unless we are ready to designate by this opprobrious term about 75 per cent of the American population of any period in our history. These four million differed in only one respect from similarly situated small farmers and mechanics in the North, and that was in the depth of their racial antagonism toward the Negro. It was fundamentally on that account and not because of adherence to any school of constitutional interpretation that many of the young men from this group "bared their breasts to Yankee bullets" in 1861-65 and gave substance to the taunt that on the Southern side at least the fratricidal struggle was a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight." That was their tragedy then, as it is the tragedy of their descendants now who permit the dividing racial issue to carry more weight than the unifying force of similar economic status.

But these "rich men" whose war it was, what of them? A little rapid calculation shows that only 37,662 men (we might say families) owned twenty or more slaves each; of these, 7,929 owned over fifty, and of the latter only 1,733 owned over a hundred each. It was these men, their wives and older children, particularly in the eleven States which formed the Confederacy, who dominated politics and gave tone to Southern society. They were more group or class conscious than farmers in general, but except for "touchiness" with respect to their "peculiar institution" they were not nearly so like-minded as bankers or manufacturers are today or perhaps were at that time. Only a very few were of cavalier or even English gentry origin, although nearly all pretended or sincerely believed themselves to be. Many, particularly in the lower South, were new-rich plutocrats, "cotton snobs," as they were called, who possessed all the blatant and grotesque characteristics of that fraternity in all times and places.

> Nevertheless [says Mr. Adams], the old planter aristocracy had an assured position and influence such as no other class in America had. . . .
>
> With the formation of this stable society had come the formation, conscious or unconscious, of the Southern philosophy of life which led directly to an art of life. It was only in the South that the belief in the fully rounded life took root and flourished. Perhaps no people have cared less for mere worldly success than the leaders of the old plantation South. The owner of a big plantation, as also its mistress, had ample responsibility, but there was also leisure; and leisure and what to do with it were as important as work, because the Southerner's main preoccupation was how to live a full life.

If the destruction of this class was a tragedy, more tragic still was the subsequent cultural conquest of the South by the North. Beginning in the eighties there arose the "New South" school which believed salvation lay in imitation of the conquerors. The South was, so to speak, Americanized. Instead of the old *noblesse oblige* of the best of the Southern gentlemen, imitating sometimes a bit too consciously and a little ridiculously Sir Walter's knightly heroes, there arose business men of the Northern type who resembled the old planters only in that their minds were conditioned toward labor in general as the masters' had been toward slaves—a lower order of people to be treated humanely so long as they remained properly docile and grateful for small favors but to be strictly disciplined when obstreperous or insurrectionary.

In protest against the glorification of the "New South" idea there has recently arisen a group of Southerners—the authors of "I'll Take My Stand," for example—who would put the South back upon its historic agrarian path. With these talented and altogether charming gentlemen Mr. Adams, in common with many unhappy Americans, South and North, has much sympathy. However, from the fulness of his wisdom and understanding he advises them that while they, like himself, may dislike the machine age, nevertheless:

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. . . it is impossible to turn the hands of the clock of history backward. . . . To insist today upon an agrarian civilization as our sole salvation is to attempt to lead not only an impossible but a parasitic life. . . . What those of us who are born into this confused age of machines, advertising, new wants, and universal suffrage have to do is to try to bring some order out of the chaos of moral values, and in an irretrievably altered world to reassert the philosophy of the Old South, to bring the new democracies to see that the values of the good life are other than material.

BENJAMIN B. KENDRICK

Study of a Family

Papa Pasquier. By Georges Duhamel. Harper and Brothers. $2.

GEORGES DUHAMEL enjoys a considerable reputation in France and has been the winner of many of its various literary prizes. Perhaps he is best known to Americans for his "Scènes de la Vie Future," which is a bitter indictment of this country and of its increasing influence upon the rest of the world. However, "Papa Pasquier," the first of what promises to be a series of many volumes, is as wise and tolerant a study of the petit-bourgeois as one is likely to find. It is written in the first person, and that person, in the prologue, explains himself and his purpose in writing his *mémoires* with admirable lucidity. He is a biologist of international fame, and this story of his childhood and of his family gives one the impression that M. Duhamel evidently strives for. One feels that this understanding person, who learned through the study of science not to be surprised by any manifestation of life, and who is consequently both gentle in his cynicism and vital in his sympathies, is addressing his readers as he would a company of friends at his club. A reader will not find here the refinements, the elaborate finesse, of Proust, the snobbishness or purple passages of Galsworthy, or any suggestion of the metaphysical concerns of Mann. The story is simple and straightforward, and told in a like manner. No character is obscure and none is related to preconceptions of the author or presented as a symbol. In short, a scientific mind deals with the members of the Pasquier family and a warm heart judges them.

The autobiography begins when Laurent Pasquier is nine years old. The preceding years are vague in the mind of the scrupulous scientist; but in the winter of 1888 the family learned of a possible inheritance, and the boy was made conscious of a world outside his own by the notary in Havre (for whom the book is better named in French) whose letters are expected daily. It is two years before a letter and half the money comes to them, before the death of one aunt in Peru (another has yet to be heard from) can be established. In that time the theme of the notary repeats itself in the family's life like a *leit-motif*, and a counterpoint of vicissitudes, of debts and illnesses, optimisms and pessimisms, is sometimes harshly, sometimes delicately played. Meanwhile, the anticipated money is almost entirely dissipated in advance. Through it all, the brave spirit of the mother holds the members of the family together, while the quick, illogical, highly picturesque explosions of the father threaten to send them adrift. With homely wisdom and considerable wit the author tells the story of this family, placing proper emphasis upon the parents who lived at a time when they could importantly influence their children, and lesser emphasis upon the children themselves, and their neighbors who lived in the same building and whose lives were bound to impinge on their own. Above all, the family appears as an inviolate entity, a microcosm; and because of the skilful writing of Duhamel, whose volume is

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See JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH *says column on page 84*

ably translated by Samuel Putnam, it is a family in whose lives the reader is able to participate and will want to participate further.

LEONARD AMSTER

Shorter Notices

The Art of the Novel. By Henry James. With an Introduction by Richard P. Blackmur. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.

R. P. Blackmur, one of the younger American critics who have been attempting to restore Henry James to the position denied him by the sociological criticism of the last generation, has performed a useful service in bringing together, within the compass of a single volume, the eighteen prefaces written by James for the rare and expensive New York Edition of his works. The advantage of having these prefaces collected in this way, however, is not only one of convenience. It helps one better to realize the completeness and general nature of James's aesthetic of fiction. Comparing James with Proust and Joyce, Mr. Blackmur makes this penetrating distinction: "The difference is that writers who follow Joyce or Proust tend to absorb their subjects, their social attitudes, and their personal styles and accomplish competent derivative work in so doing, while the followers of James absorb something of a technical mastery good for any subject, any attitude, any style." Taken as a whole, this collection of James's prefaces constitutes the most profound manual of the art of fiction in the language.

Modern Things. Edited by Parker Tyler. The Galleon Press. $2.

The editor of this anthology seems unaware that neither the tendencies described in his introduction nor the poets illustrating these tendencies are quite so "modern" as they were fifteen or even ten years ago. Modern values are still undoubtedly in flux, as we are once again reminded, but it is not so certain that the response to this situation in poetry is any longer the "tentacular resiliency" manifested in H. R. Hays, "the effect of soundlessness" in Charles Ford, or the Rimbaudian hallucination cultivated by the editor himself. Poetry *is* "a realm of terrible decisiveness," as Mr. Tyler says, and the chief trouble with most of these young poets is that they are too little decided about anything. Of course they are decided about their literary influences, and half of the book is devoted to contributions by T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings, and other poets of the generation which capitalized the "flux." But literary values are not the same as philosophical values; and a poet of today cannot appropriate the literary values of the last generation without subscribing to the philosophical values—or the lack of them—on which that generation operated. The two exceptions that must be made are Harold Rosenberg and Lionel Abel, in both of whom the effort to decide produces a tension which gives a passionate intensity to their work. And it is interesting to note that Mr. Abel's poetry, which is freshest in reflective feeling, is also the least derivative in form and style.

You Can't Sleep Here. By Edward Newhouse. The Macaulay Company. $2.

Despite the fact that Mr. Newhouse has not rid himself of certain outmoded technical and stylistic influences and not yet altogether assimilated his materials, he has written one of the more readable novels of the season. Beginning as one of those first-person narratives cast in the Hemingway mood of romantic frustration, the book shifts rather abruptly to the depiction of the kind of life which we find in Jack Conroy, Meridel LeSueur, and other more recent chroniclers of the

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depression. The rather too smart-aleck narrator, discouraged at not finding a job, takes up lodgings in one of New York's Hoovervilles and joins in a demonstration against the police. Although the elements of the violent and the sensational inherent in the subject are unnecessarily stressed toward the end, Mr. Newhouse has many of the gifts of the good story-teller. The greatest defect of the book is in the style, which reflects a sensibility not yet completely liberated from the inverted self-pity of the hard-boiled attitude. But Mr. Newhouse, who is a very young writer, has had the wisdom to choose that direction which is likely to lead to the most profitable results for the novel in the immediate future.

Modern Thought and Literature in France. By Régis Michaud. Funk and Wagnalls Company. $2.

Written for American readers and with an American point of view, this survey by a professor of French literature at the University of Illinois is chiefly remarkable as a feat of order and condensation. It manages to catalogue the more important movements and figures in French cultural history of the last thirty years and to make a few remarks about each within a minimum of space. For the reader wholly unfamiliar with the field the book will have a certain usefulness, but for others its treatment of the separate movements and men will undoubtedly seem superficial. As is usually the case in books of this sort, there is insufficient discrimination between writers belonging to the same movement, and a truly remarkable poet like Pierre-Jean Jouve is hardly distinguished from a poet like Pierre Reverdy.

Morning Shows the Day. By Helen Hull. Coward-McCann. $2.50.

Helen Hull knows how to write. She builds a novel with economy and dramatic skill. She has written here another book about Main Street as it exists and determines the lives of high-school boys and girls. She understands these young people and sees with swift irony just what their possibilities are. But her book has the limitations that any such realistic study of youth is likely to have: it rises to no heights either of passion or of anguish. The result of this dead-level quality is a little dull.

Drama

Life Keeps Going After Fifty

SOME years ago Samson Raphaelson sprang into fame and fortune with a sentimental melodrama entitled "The Jazz Singer." After a long run on Broadway it reappeared as the first "one hundred per cent talking picture," and since then Mr. Raphaelson has spent most of his time in Hollywood except for brief periods during which new dramatic works from his pen were opened and closed in the East. One of them, called "Young Love," had admirers, among whom I numbered myself, but its life was almost as brief as the life of the others and its author might have been pardoned a certain discouragement. Unless, however, all signs fail, persistence is about to reap its reward, and "Accent on Youth" (Plymouth Theater) will be a very comfortable success—thanks to a gratifying thesis, an admirable production, and some extremely amusing writing.

The first thing one notices in Mr. Raphaelson is an almost dangerously sure sense of the theater. That, of course, was evident in "The Jazz Singer," where it operated upon the level of popular sentiment, but it is even more conspicuous when it appears in the new play as an uncanny gift for manipulating a sophisticated story in the manner best calculated to bring to

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□ JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH says □

ACCENT ON YOUTH. Plymouth Theater. Reviewed in this issue.

ANYTHING GOES. Alvin Theater. Victor Moore as Public Enemy No. 13 in a No. 1 musical revue, with Ethel Merman at her best.

GOLD EAGLE GUY. Morosco Theater. How a ruthless superman built a shipping empire on the West Coast. Excellent production by the Group Theater of a forceful and picturesque drama, with a fine performance by J. Edward Bromberg. One of the best dramas of the season.

LIFE BEGINS AT 8:40. Winter Garden. Disputes with "Anything Goes" for first place among the revues.

MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG. Music Box Theater. One of the outstanding hits and very good indeed if you don't mind having your serious plays use a little staycomb in their hair. By George Kaufman and Moss Hart, who excoriate cheap success without forgetting to put in a few wisecracks where they will do most good.

ODE TO LIBERTY. Lyceum Theater. Gilbert Miller's characteristically suave production of a rather trifling French play in which Ina Claire tames a fugitive Communist through love—of the profane variety.

PAGE MISS GLORY. Mansfield Theater. Dorothy Hall in a rough and ready satire on beauty contests which isn't too particular how it gets its laughs, but gets them anyway.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE. Henry Miller's Theater. Much like the above but about a movie star this time and perhaps a trifle less mechanical.

POST ROAD. Masque Theater. Novel and exciting crook melodrama which begins as a quiet domestic comedy but has lots of surprises up its sleeve.

RAIN FROM HEAVEN. Golden Theater. Perhaps the best—and certainly the most substantial—of S. N. Behrman's excellent comedies. With Jane Cowl as a charming embodiment of urbanity and tolerance in a world seemingly about to lose both.

REVENGE WITH MUSIC. New Amsterdam Theater. Charles Winninger, Rex O'Malley, and Libby Holman in a lavish and generally entertaining operetta with lots of comedy and some good dancing in a more or less Spanish manner.

ROMEO AND JULIET. Martin Beck Theater. Swift and beautiful production with Katharine Cornell as Juliet, Basil Rathbone as Romeo, Edith Evans as the Nurse, and Brian Aherne as Mercutio.

SAILORS OF CATTARO. Civic Repertory Theater. The third and much the best offering by the Theater Union, which goes in for plays with a revolutionary purpose. This one is all about a mutiny on board an Austrian man-of-war, and it is first rate as a play, quite aside from the red-flag waving.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR. Maxine Elliott's Theater. Tense but grim drama about a fiendishly perverse child, who is played with extraordinary force by Florence McGee. One of the most-discussed plays of the year.

THE DISTAFF SIDE. Booth Theater. A sizable hit by John Van Druten, but one which seemed unnecessarily tame to me. With Sybil Thorndike.

THE FARMER TAKES A WIFE. Forty-sixth Street Theater. Picturesque and remarkably engaging comedy by Frank Elser and Marc Connelly about the great days of the Erie Canal. To me one of the most enjoyable evenings of the season.

VALLEY FORGE. Guild Theater. Maxwell Anderson's entertaining drama about George Washington, with Philip Merivale as the Father of His Country. The whole thing seemed very pleasantly theatrical to me, but there are many who take it more seriously without liking it any the less.

WITHIN THE GATES. National Theater. Sean O'Casey's poetic and symbolic morality play about the Dreamer, the Bishop, and the Young Whore in Hyde Park. According to many good critics it is the great modern play, but I found it a bit pretentious.

the eye as well as to the ear everything it is capable of yielding. Once one of the characters mentions Molnar, and the reference is inevitable, for Mr. Raphaelson has Molnar's delight in manipulating his puppets and in giving an additional fillip to his effects by calling attention to their artificiality just at the moment when his audience has been betrayed into taking them with entire seriousness. Nor is the comparison altogether in the older dramatist's favor. His talents sometimes offend; he is too complacently slick, too condescendingly superior. But Mr. Raphaelson has a youthful enthusiasm and a humorous zest which effectively dispose of any suggestion of condescension. He is not showing off but doing something a great deal more ingratiating than that can be. He is inviting us to have a good time along with him, and the fact makes all the difference in the world. When the lady who was *de trop* marched off with the flowers which a more welcome rival had just put in the wastebasket, I had a vague sense that I had seen that done before, but when the heroine asked innocently, "Were those *her* flowers?" and the lover replied ruefully, "Yes, but that's my wastebasket," the effect was pure fun.

As to the gratifying thesis which I referred to above, it is simply that a middle-aged man, in this case past fifty, can sometimes be more attractive to a young girl than green and muscular youth. The young members of the audience will hardly resent the suggestion because they will know in their hearts that they have not a great deal to fear, but dramatic critics, as well as the majority of paying customers, are commonly approaching an uncertain age, and it is no small comfort to be assured that even if one has no intention of marrying one's beautiful secretary, at least the thing might be done with some fair chance of success. There was no burst of applause at the end of the big scene, in which the secretary here in question expatiated with eloquence upon the dulness of youth and described the tedium involved in following an athlete from tennis court, to golf links, to swimming pool, only to find when night came that he had to exercise in his bedchamber a couple of muscles somehow overlooked during the day. There was, I say, no burst of applause, since we of forty and more have learned to hide our feelings. But unless I am very much mistaken, the baldish gentleman next to me gripped the arms of his chair and there was a muffled "Ah!" somewhere in the darkness behind. In the lobby a bit later I heard one young thing remark to a youth whose charms were not obvious to me, "I don't see how she could have fallen for that old bird," but fortunately her words can have reached few ears, and Mr. Raphaelson had been most convincing. Thanks to him, to Constance Cummings as the girl, to Nicholas Hannen as the well-preserved man, and to the direction of Ben Levy, who once wrote "Springtime for Henry," there is a very pleasant evening in the theater awaiting almost anybody at the Plymouth. And when I say "in the theater" I am not using a conventional phrase. "Accent on Youth" is theater spelled with a capital, set in italics, and inclosed in quotation marks.

Any musical revue which includes Bobby Clark and his friend McCullough gets off on the right foot so far as I am concerned. "Thumbs Up" (St. James Theater) has the good judgment to do just this, besides supplying such other pleasant persons as Eddie Dowling, Ray Dooley, and Hal LeRoy. It's a bit old-fashioned—as when, for example, a tenor dreaming of the past before a genuine oil painting of his beloved is visited in a dream by a succession of beautiful female memories; it is also a bit vaudevillistic and distinctly not in the smartest tradition. But it is not bad entertainment. The Pickens sisters are also there to sing in their usual confidential manner and to remind me again how God in His providence seems always to see to it that theatrically inclined sisters have voices appropriate to a trio or quartet.

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